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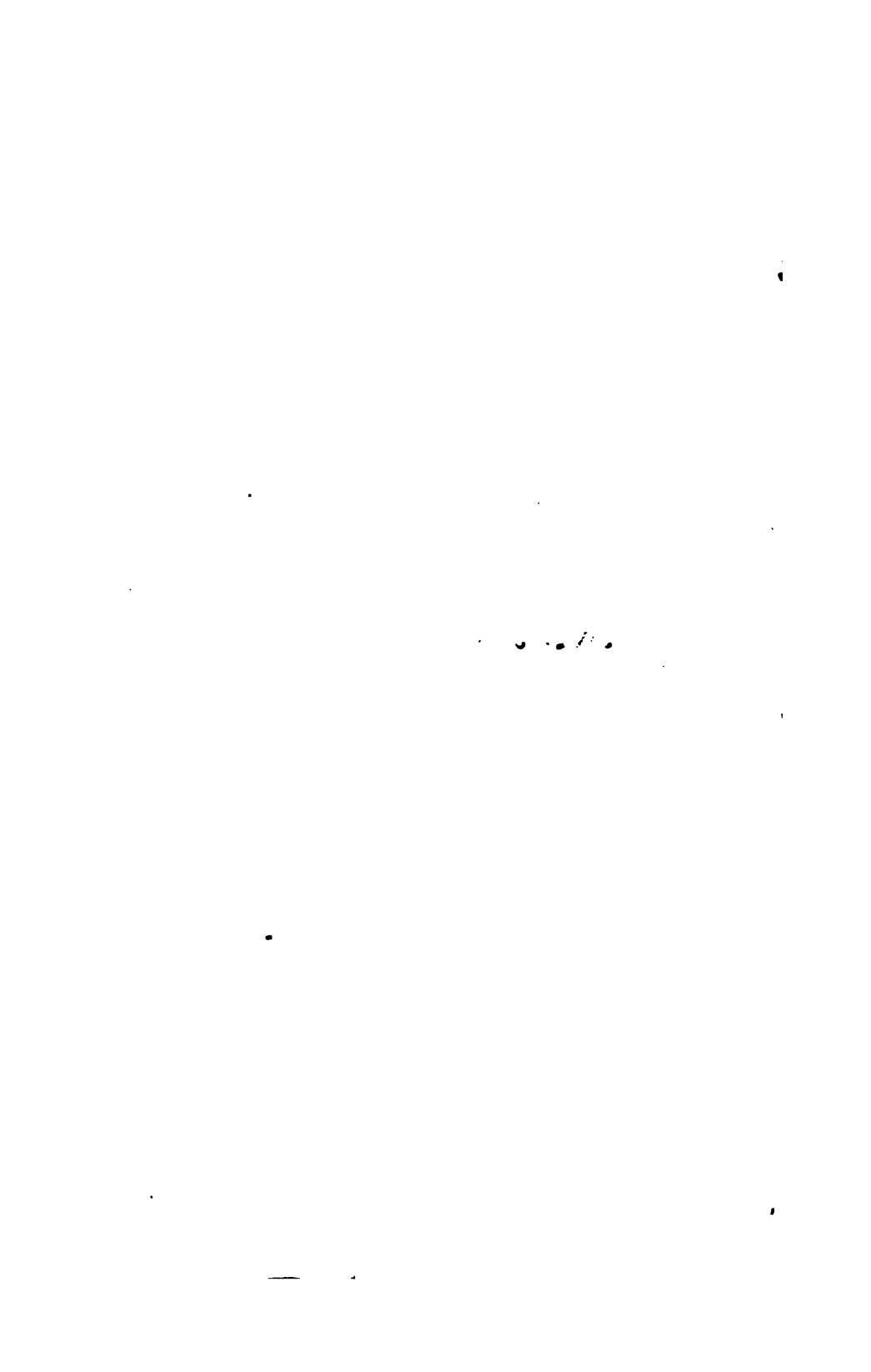
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1843







**RAVENCOURT.**

WOLVERHAMPTON:  
PRINTED BY J. BRIDGEN, DARLINGTON STREET.

# RAVEN COURT;

## **A Dramatic Legend,**

IN THREE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT WOLVERHAMPTON.

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BY

HENRY W. WYNN.

LONDON :  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND COMPANY,  
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.  
JOSEPH BRIDGEN, WOLVERHAMPTON.  
1843.

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TO MRS. B. WALTON,

THE LOWLANDS.

---

DEAR MADAM,

AS AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PAST KINDNESS,  
THE MEMORY OF WHICH WILL NEVER IN THE SLIGHTEST  
DEGREE BE OBLITERATED, PERMIT ME TO DEDICATE THIS  
EARLY LABOR TO YOU,

AND BELIEVE ME, DEAR MADAM,

YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

HENRY W. WYNN.

GRAISLEY, SEPT. 1, 1843.



# RAVENCOURT;

OR,

ST. HELDERED'S WELL.

---

Ye heavenly guards of gentleness,  
That watch with tender pinion o'er  
    All infant helplessness,  
Vouchsafe your mild dominion o'er  
A thing that nature hath forgot to bless !  
On its young life hath reason never shone :  
    'Tis as a barren spot of earth  
That shadows everlasting fall upon.

Thou'rt no unruly idiot!—  
My sweet and ever passive boy,  
    Thy countenance is fraught  
With smiles of captivating joy,  
Expression's simplest touches ! such as caught  
In sculpture's ecstasies of inspiration.  
    A soulless image art thou, child,  
Perfect but in the outlines of creation !



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

---

Lord Ravencourt.....	<i>Mr. Young.</i>
Sir Hubert.....	<i>Mr. Cowle.</i>
Frantz.....	<i>Mr. Stirling.</i>
Hal, the Falconer.....	<i>Mr. G. Jones.</i>
Adam Thorn.....	<i>Mr. Johnstone.</i>
Davy.....	<i>Mr. Suter.</i>
Ernest.....	<i>Madame Buck.</i>
Reynel Darrant.....	<i>Monsieur Buck.</i>
Page.....	<i>Miss Beaumont.</i>
Seneschal.....	<i>Mr. Haynes.</i>
Guide.....	<i>Mr. Laney.</i>

### Officers, Retainers, &c.

Alice Brand.....	<i>Mrs. Cowle.</i>
Katie Thorn.....	<i>Miss Kate Howard.</i>
Dame Thorn.....	<i>Mrs. Young.</i>

### Villagers, &c.



## PREFACE.

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The Author is emboldened to offer the following Legend to the public, as well from the kind indulgence with which it was received when presented on the stage, as from a persuasion that the present form possesses advantages for the author which are altogether unavailable in representation. Without having the vanity to suppose that its intrinsic merits are sufficient to entitle it to any large share of public favour, he hopes that it may meet with the approval of its dramatic readers, as a testimony of zeal for the rational and instructive amusements of a well regulated theatre; and, more than all, with the full indulgence of its critics for the unavoidable imperfections of a first attempt in a species of composition surrounded with innumerable difficulties.









ACT III. SCENE V.

SIR HUBERT.

"Fear not, my boy: I'll do't no injury."





# RAVENCOURT.

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\* The passages marked with inverted commas are omitted in representation.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Hall in the Castle.*

*Enter LORD RAVENCOURT and COURIER, meeting.*

COURIER. [*Giving despatches.*]

These to the Lord of Ravencourt.

RAVENCOURT.

The king's :—[*Reads.*]

“ By these we command thy presence at the court.....

Within three days to depart on foreign embassy.

“ THE KING.”

Commend me to my sovereign.

[*Exit Courier.*]

Without there.

[*Enter PAGE.*]

Hubert must know this. Take the fleetest horse  
And bear these with all speed and diligence  
To Sir Hubert Ravencourt. Despatch, despatch;  
Tell him affairs of moment need his counsel.

[*Exit Page.*]

On foreign embassy ;—what ill remains

To balance ill and crown the expiation ?

“ My boy, his mother dead, and Alice lost

“ Who else had been to him as fond a mother,

“ What eye shall watch this jewel like my own ?

“ Even of my brother I know but little either

“ For good or evil ; yet a stranger's hand,

“ Without some test and proof of worthiness,

“ Were worse entrusted with such precious charge !

“ Alice,—where fled she,—where can she be found ?

“ Alice ! how still familiar is the sound

"Of that dear name! where found?—ay, ask again.  
 "Who found her, stole her, and could ne'er replace  
 "The treasure in the rifled store should know  
 "In his own heart its secret hiding place?  
 "No; seek her not in either of her homes,  
 "Nor that she left, nor that she fled unto  
 "Herself can show nor anything as fair,  
 "Nor shall her presence brighten them again.  
 "Not there,—but seek her through the dreary world  
 "In shame or poverty or death!" Alice,  
 Oh, sole beloved of youth, first, best, and last,  
 Not idly past thy father's words when he  
 O'erwhelm'd with madness and despair, invoked  
 The Avenger's wrath on my dishonour'd head.  
 Had I deserted her, methinks regret  
 Had been less poignant, but to steal away  
 By night, as from a thing of foul revolt,  
 Loathed and abhorred,—'twas bitterness tenfold!  
 To leave me in the night!—Oh, foul in her  
 For whom all friendship and all other love,  
 Regard of men, esteem of parentage,  
 Honour itself, all else I sacrificed  
 Save one, to all thy prayers that was denied.  
 All that was mine I gave her, life and heart  
 Devoted to her, aye, a dearer thing,  
 The last beyond death,—honour. But my rank  
 Was but a ward by lineage bequeathed,  
 Not mine to lose to barter or to sell  
 By right of ownership; it was a charge  
 Of guardianship to keep, secure, defend!  
 More that I did esteem than private honour,  
 More precious held it than thy love: those lost,  
 That still remains; by sacred transfer passed  
 Through ages of renown, it lived in me,  
 Lives in my child.—

[Enter ERNEST with REYNEL.]

I will not murmur, heaven. [*Sits.*] Ernest.

ERNEST. [*Climbing to his knee; Reynel sits on the stage apart.*]  
 Ay, father.

RAVENCOURT.

Would he resembled her!  
 Can'st part with me, sweet lad?

[*Reynel turns suddenly.*]

ERNEST.

Leave Ernest, no.

RAVENCOURT.

Wilt to the wars with me and be a soldier?

ERNEST. [*To Reynel.*]

Up, Reynel, up. Why does he never speak?  
Ho, Reynel! shall he take us to the wars?

RAVENCOURT.

I am about to leave you: nay, not for long.

ERNEST.

He shall not, Reynel.

RAVENCOURT.

While I am away,  
You shall have a noble horse to hunt among  
The mountains; fresh hounds,—a new cast of falcons.

ERNEST.

Then you shall go; but Reynel shall stay with me,  
And Alice.

RAVENCOURT.

Alice!

ERNEST.

His mother,—widow Alice.

RAVENCOURT.

Oh. Is she not poor, Ernest, this widow Alice?

ERNEST.

Yes, and so kind and gentle; then she kneels  
And prays to us, and often cries alone.  
But don't you know her?

RAVENCOURT.

Yet she rejects my bounty. Oft in life  
We find more pride upon the pauper's hearth  
Than in the regal palace! Whom but the blest  
Should mend the broken heart? Go Ernest, take  
My seneschal; at leisure I'll provide her; [*Rising.*]  
Bid him take clothing and nutritious food,  
In better leisure thou shalt take me thither.

ERNEST. [*Pointing.*]

Come, Reynel, to sweet Alice, to the village.

[*Exit Ernest with Reynel.*]

RAVENCOURT. [*Looking after them.*]

"To tear the blossom from the parent stem;—  
"To leave it stript of its support, abandoned  
"A prey to fortune and to circumstance!"  
I love not Hubert; uncongenial  
As boys, these distastes grew up with our manhood.  
Our paths lay separate at our father's death;  
He joined the intriguers in some wild court scheme  
And forced to flight, did sojourn long abroad.—  
I gained his pardon, and though since neglecting,  
Perchance this trust of mine shall make our peace.



[Enter PAGE.]

PAGE.

My lord, Sir Hubert Ravencourt.

[Enter SIR HUBERT, FRANTZ, HAL, and SENESCHAL.]

RAVENCOURT.

That's joyful news.

Brother thou art most welcome ; and the more  
 I am beholden to thy promptitude  
 We having strangers been till this behest.  
 I have done ill to let my selfish cares  
 Wed me to solitude, and so prevent  
 The exercise of sweet fraternal love.  
 Thou know'st my negligence was undesigning,  
 Only from absence mutual coldness grew,  
 Or contrary pursuits which breed reserve  
 The which again becomes distrust, and so  
 Mars all affection. Hubert, do believe me,  
 This severance hath cost me daily grief ;  
 And as a peril doth two hearts unite  
 That distant were before, this accident  
 Shall prove the means of our reunion.  
 Be lenient, and thou'lt presently proclaim  
 My scale of faults weigh'd down by gratitude.

SIR HUBERT.

Mine was the fault, my lord ; a sense of shame  
 Or pride forbade the proffer of my thanks  
 When debtor to your supplications for  
 My pardon and recall from exile.  
 This pride of mine, my lord, is nature's present ;  
 A gift most out of keeping with my state,  
 Being a younger brother !

RAVENCOURT.

And so being,  
 Worthy of all my confidence, my Hubert.  
 Thou know'st our lineage dates antecedent  
 To many in the realm !

SIR HUBERT.

There's not a branch  
 Even from our ancestor Sir Reginald,  
 Whose Norman prowess was the theme of bards  
 Ere Hastings was achieved, I do not know  
 And knowing honour.—“ Hence have I forgotten,  
 “ In nourishing our pride of ancestry,  
 “ That I am but a humble branch, my brother,  
 “ Not as the trunk from which a future race  
 “ Shall spring to keep still green our ancient fame.”

[*Re-enter ERNEST and REYNEL.*]

RAVENCOURT.

"Hold on that theme :—Oh, Hubert, I have shed

"No lustre on its glories ; secret sorrow

"Hath paralyzed my soul and visited

"My manly energies with impotence."

Yet may we hope in you sweet gift of heaven

A golden harvest Hubert ; [*Points to Ernest.*]

Mark the boy !

His attitude, in what a mould 'tis cast !

The Spartan's vigour with the comelier graces

Of classic beauty blended : scan that brow

So youthful, yet so bold !—how should dishonour

Cover its speaking nobleness ? an eye,

The set of which I'll one day prophecy

Shall blanch the dastard's cheek and bend the head

Of harden'd shame in very abjectness.

And yet, my Hubert, in the smile below

Methinks there's more than woman's gentleness

To temper and to chasten down the whole.

[*Crossing to and embracing Ernest.*]

Ha, ha ; I'm vain you think, o'er vain ; I know

You think so now ;—but 'tis my only vanity.

Thou art his uncle, Hubert, share my pride :

The blood that mantles in that little cheek

Is thine and mine ; I'll give my boy to thee.

I'll give him to thee ;—aye, indeed I will :—

Thou'rt fittest guardian, for thou'lt love the boy

Without a father's dotage.

SIR HUBERT.

I accept

The task my lord, and princely trust it is !

The heir of Ravencourt.

RAVENCOURT.

I owe thee much.

"Keep him, my brother, as thou wouldst our name.

"He represents our race, rank, heritage !"

Watch, guard him well !—He's our whole title Hubert ;—

Well—well, I know thou wilt ; I'd swear thou'lt love him.

Aye, there. My lands and revenues, good brother,

I've rendered thee by fief baronial ;

Use them profusely, hold my gratitude

Not lighter than the most thou canst enjoy !

SIR HUBERT.

Hither boy !

RAVENCOURT.

O prithee uncle, speak most gently to him—

He's quickly sensitive, and his young heart  
 Will melt or chill with trivial occasion.  
 He scarce hath lack'd a mother's tenderness,  
 Bespeak him with all kindness. [*Passes him over to Sir Hubert.*]

ERNEST.

Will you fly my hawks?

SIR HUBERT.

Not I, fair nephew. I have travell'd much,  
 And learn'd the wonders of the world withal,  
 Strange stories, histories, and sciences;—  
 These will I tell thee of, and wars and soldiers.  
 [*Sir Hubert and Ernest go back.*]

RAVENCOURT. [*To Hal.*]

Good falconer, a word. Full confidence  
 I give thee still to prosecute my search.  
 Let constant watch be kept thro'out the hamlet  
 That shall preclude our missing her; she'll visit  
 Her father's grave.

HAL.

Depend on me, my lord.

RAVENCOURT.

Here's money, and a passport in my ring;  
 Time presses my departure. Seneschal,  
 And all, until I shall return, behold  
 Myself as in Sir Hubert. Now, farewell.  
 Brother, we'll beg thy little charge awhile  
 To see us on the way; heaven bless thee, boy!  
 [*Music. Exit with Ernest, followed by all but Sir Hubert.*]

SIR HUBERT.

A trust;—let's weigh the nature of the trust:  
 'Tis but a bond;—a bond requires two seals,  
 Still frangible, if either disagree.—  
 A verbal compact soon as made's annul'd,  
 And then as soon forgot. Hold! that involves  
 A question to be at once conferred upon;  
 I'll go consult on this with my familiar.

[*Exit.*]

---

SCENE II.—*Before the Wheatsheaf.*

[*Enter ADAM and DAME THORN, disputing.*]

ADAM.

Tut, tut, I don't believe a word on't; a cock and a bull! Sir  
 Hubert's a Ravencourt, or that old sign was never a wheatsheaf!  
 Aye, and harkee, dame, a right good manor-lord, and full of pleasan-  
 tries and merry conceit. "Adam," quoth he, "friend Adam," so he  
 spake,—“thou'st lost a steer they tell me; take thy manor debt, get

thee another bullock." Then called he to the kitchener, and ordered him to put me at the capons and the larder stores; and to the vintner, he said, "Take mine host o' the Wheatsheaf to the buttery; let him to a smack o' that old canary." Ah, that old canary! Verily one bumper tottle o' that old canary beateth a kilderkin of all your sack! Sir Hubert's a gentleman.

DAME.

Oh, Adam, Adam, a murrain o' thy paunch! A cup of wine would buy thee, body and soul. But, Master Thorn, take heed what I foresee, for so falleth the event, my word on't. I can spy further o' the truth thro' a millstone than thou can'st with all thy wits and eyes to boot, and I say this Sir Hubert looks askaunt on our young lord, not lovingly. Guardian, forsooth! What careth he for the rights of the true heir? no more than for a hair dropping from his head, good man. The old castle in his claw, and the heir in his claw, and in trust forsooth! He's stept within his brother's shoes good Adam. Guardian,—as well to set the fox to guard our chick-roost!

ADAM.

Tush! I grant ye the lord has lived half his days in foreign countries where men learn nought but to deny the saints and blaspheme our holy pope; still is he not by kith and kin a Ravencourt? Hath he not already lowered our taxes? I say Sir Hubert is a good man.

DAME.

Thou say'st anything or nothing, as it suits thy ends. The world, Adam,—what sayeth the world touching him?

ADAM.

The world's a liar, Dame Thorn; find me a greater. What said the world of our holy priest, father John? The world said he had a stammer. A lie and a libel, quoth friar John; 'tis my way, my way. And if the world pluck a crow with Sir Hubert, never was the world farther off the mark, Dame Thorn. But, come, hurry away, is not this the lord's birth-day, and though he be absent shall we not do justice to his goodness in the same spirit? Bustle! prepare the boards within;—the ox and capons, the sack and treble ale! make ready the dance. The saints grant him safe return and speedy. Make ready, dame, I'll bid the villagers. *[Exit.]*

DAME.

Marry will I, Adam, and that readily, and the young folks shall make a day on't. What jigs and twirls we'll have! and my Katie to be the flower of the ring. Where is the slattern? That reminds me to read her a stiff homily about falconer Hal, and now's the time, before the dance begins. Katie Thorn! *[Calling.]* Katie, I say!

*[Enter KATIE, singing.]*

Sir Hubert, I wis, is a knight so bold,  
And Sir Frantz is his valiant squire;  
Sir Hubert's so bland, and Sir Frantz is so bold,  
The damsels so young, and the dowdies so old,  
They sigh for the knight, and they ogle the squire!

Let some to the convent, and some to the can,  
 And some to another love flee;  
 Let some to the convent, and some to the can,  
 For Sir Hubert the bold is no lady-love's man  
 And the valliant Sir Frantz comes a wooing to me.

DAME.

Aroynt the giddy wench! Katie Thorn, I say!

KATIE. [*With mock dignity.*]

And what would you, good mother?

DAME.

Hoity-toity! you toss-cap minx, put off your vixen airs. I see which way's the wind. This comes of gallivanting with a valley. Oh, daughter, little and little in bad beginnings leads to unlucky ends: there's Hal, the falconer, a honest lad, one of sport and mettle, twice the man; and honest court he's paid you since the day you first knew difference 'twixt he and she. No sooner comes this good-for-naught Italian,—some knave picked by Sir Hubert out of some brigand's nest, than thus you jilt your lover: worse will come on't. Ballads,—go mend your kirtle! scour your milking cans! like any other honest pains-taking lass. Your mother's Goody Thorn;—Sir Frantz, indeed; Sir Hubert next, I count! Ha, ha, Sir Frantz.

[*Exit within.*]

KATIE.

Ha, ha; Sir Frantz! [*Mimicing.*] What a fussy old woman! Don't like being laugh'd at though,—[*Enter FRANTZ behind.*—]pleasanter to laugh at one's self. Ah, old people think the young folks mighty foolish; but young people know the old folks to be so. Hal is a good natured well intention'd young fellow enough in his way; nobody denies it: but then he's too plain, too homespun! As for Mr. Frantz, he's all the courtly travelled gentleman;—might be mistaken for a count at least;—then his moustache! how elegant his moustache! then he gives me bracelets;—[*Taking them from her pocket.*—]Chaste! beautiful! [*Admiring them.*] calls me sweet Katie; gentle Mistress Thorn;—wears silver spurs and gold lace;—tells droll tales;—delightful Frantz! [*Kissing the bracclets.*] were he here now, I think I could almost kiss him.

FRANTZ. [*Coming forward.*]

Why so you can, my pigeon. Already limed! now for the fowler's net. [*Aside.*] Why so you can. [*Kissing her.*] First lily of the valley,—first to blossom at rise of sun.

KATIE. [*Confused.*]

I—— I—— Whence did you come?

FRANTZ. [*Smiling.*]

Straight hither from the castle, and o'erhearing——

KATIE. [*Alarmed.*]

O'erhearing——what?

FRANTZ.

Your tongue, my nightingale: I flew to join you. Ah, my humble present;—suffer me but to clasp them, they so become you!

*[Puts them on.]*

KATIE.

Fie!

FRANTZ.

Heaven, what a hand! there's none so fair in Florence!  
Nay, my blush-rose, 'tis most unequal praise.

KATIE.

Flattery,—Oh fie, sir! Master Frantz, you flatter.

FRANTZ.

Nay, I protest upon my honour!  
But wherefore *Master Frantz*? plain Frantz, sweet maid.  
Beseech you call me Frantz, they do at court.  
I have a little history of these bracelets,  
But modesty forbids;—

KATIE.

O tell me of it, Master Frantz.

FRANTZ.

Ahem!  
Once on my travels through the mountain wilds  
Of Tuscany, a lonely tract, by night,  
I came upon some brigands, suddenly,  
Rifling a broken carriage. "To the rescue!"  
Shouting, I drew my rapier and upon them.  
Four of the band I slew, and scared the rest;  
Then from the vehicle there sprung a lady,  
Calling me her deliverer! These she gave me.  
'Twas the Grand Duchess of—Tuscany!

KATIE.

A duchess, Master Frantz! What—

FRANTZ.

Aye, on my honour as a gentleman,  
I saved her life.

KATIE.

And gave she nothing more?

FRANTZ.

And gave she nothing more?—I'd not accept it!  
She offered me [*sus*-]pension, I declined.  
She begged I'd visit her at court, but I  
Declined to [*h*]alter my free-breath'd condition.  
She offer'd me the highest place in court,  
And I declined.

KATIE.

And why?

FRANTZ.

I never loved  
 The rude gaze of the public; 'specially  
 When raised above my most remote ambition!  
 I' faith I'm glad; I should have made, methinks,  
 But sorry figure and a pointing stock [Music heard within.  
 For less knaves than myself. Ha, music!

KATIE.

'Tis the villagers. You'll dance?

FRANTZ.

Why no; and yes,  
 We'll shew the rustics presently a picture  
 Of grace and skill; let us look by awhile.

[Re-enter ADAM, with villagers, they disperse about.]

ADAM.

Well met, my friends, well met; now for a merry day.

ALL.

The dance.

ADAM.

The Wheatsheaf doors are open to all, free of cost, this day. What  
 ho, within; house, house, dame!

[Re-enter DAME.]

The dance, and then the sports and games; cudgel and backsword,  
 quoit and bowling match, and tilt in the ring. Strike up the music.

[They dance; Frantz and Katie converse apart. Enter  
 REYNEL with a basket of flowers. Leaving the dance  
 singly, they take nosegays, after dropping coins into his  
 basket. He sits apart watching Frantz, and presently  
 beckons within.]

[Enter HAL.]

HAL. [Aside.]

Poor fellow, simple as thou art, thou hast more sense than many a  
 speaking creature. [Giving money.] I see how it is; I did love her;  
 look'd to call her wife; well, well, may be she is happier chosen. I'll  
 speak to her, and if he mean her ill,—she shall not go unwarned  
 though. I'll watch them closely. Here comes my young lord  
 Ernest with Sir Hubert.

[Enter SIR HUBERT leading ERNEST.]

ADAM and ALL.

A Ravencourt! a Ravencourt! long life to the heir!

SIR HUBERT.

Good morrow Adam and good villagers.  
 Let this day's gaiety be at my expense;

A show indeed! your ox will need companions.  
 Let your one ox be four, that all have plenty.  
 Open your cellars and good larder, Adam,  
 Spigot your barrels;—mine be the expense.  
 I see your faces honour the occasion.

ADAM.

Thanks, Sir Hubert. Wilt please you take a draught in the doors?  
 So my lord was wont to honour us. *[Villagers cheer.]*

SIR HUBERT.

You love my brother, villagers; I like this;  
 And by as much as though 'twere shown myself,  
 Do value your regards.

VILLAGERS.

Huzza!

SIR HUBERT.

'Tis a point. *[To Frantz.]*

ADAM.

A flask for Sir Hubert. A flask of Rhenish.

SIR HUBERT.

Flask!—hear that, my friends; a flask, good Adam,  
 On such a day, a flask? a brimming goblet! *[All laugh.]*  
 Ha, ha, a goblet. Why you take me, Adam, *[They bring him wine.]*  
 For some dull scholar; *[drinks it off]* learn me better man!  
 I love a royst, mine host, and freely join  
 I' merry flask and flagon. In with your measures.  
 We'll drink the next cup to our absent lord,  
 Then mark your field sports and distribute prizes.

ADAM.

Doff your caps, rascals! A noble gentleman! Ha, ha, *[Going in]*  
 how far thro' the millstone, Dame? this is your word. *[Aside.]*

DAME.

'Twill serve thee for a collar yet! *[Aside.]*

ADAM.

Get in, or I shall be cholered, in good earnest. Your millstone!  
 ha, ha. Come in, all, come in.

*[In, Dame, Adam, and Villagers, shouting. Sir Hubert  
 beckons to Frantz; they retire. Ernest goes to Reynel,  
 who gives him flowers.]*

HAL *[Crossing.]*

Katie, I have something to say.

KATIE.

Katie, indeed!—that's the worst of getting friendly. I wonder—  
 but I'll give him a hint. Well Master Hal, some petition to Sir  
 Hubert I suppose, and you want my assistance; you shall have it,

HAL.

Humph.



KATIE.

Frantz shall manage it.

HAL.

Plague o' Frantz! [*Aside.*] Petition? I have no petition: and if I had, a fearless tongue and honest can petition for itself.

KATIE.

Grace be with us, good falconer; what now? Is it a new moon, or hast found a treasure? Your thoughts are above your labour, I am convinced, sir.

HAL.

Pshaw girl! No more trifling; but hear me a word before we part.

KATIE.

Part!—I did not think—you can't be serious, Hal.

HAL.

I am; and wish to give you a word of advice.

KATIE.

Advice?—What shall I do? [*Aside*] Yes, Hal; go on;—but don't waste my precious time,—a—because I've an appointment.

HAL.

An appointment;—

KATIE.

Yes,—only with my poultry. [*Trying to laugh.*]

HAL.

Hark you;—Sir Hubert and myself like not each other. Ah, Katie Thorn, many an hour have we passed together in yonder woods, when children. Can you call to mind that moonlight night when we stayed in our walk to cut our names on the old beech tree by the well, and as I cut the letters for you, you said, not till these letters are worn away may we be parted? A lovely moonlight night,—don't you,—you must remember it;—

KATIE. [*Sobbing.*]

No, I don't remember it. No—no—Oh!

HAL.

No matter. I passed the spot this very morning, at daybreak; it was cut down,—that tree! My grandfather and my father sat in its shade, and it was an old tree then; but Sir Hubert ordered it to be felled. Looking about, I found a strip of bark. I took it up,—'tis here,—see! Here is my name! and 'tis the only one,—the rest, is cut away.

KATIE. [*Crying.*]

Do not go, dear Hal! we all love you! that is, we all—look, [*pointing to Reynel.*] 'Tis enough to make the dumb speak!

HAL.

Don't cry, don't cry; your feelings overcome you. A few days,—and all will be smooth again. Before we go, remember Hal's last words; he loves not at all, who loves not honestly! Farewell.

[*Exit Hal.*]

KATIE.

Stay, Hal. He's gone away, and I shall never see him again. Alas, Katie Thorn! all through these bracelets. How I hate that Frantz; a bad, wicked man, to tempt me with these bracelets! I'll throw them away: yet no;—that would be a pity: I'll keep the bracelets, but I'll never, no never, speak to that Frantz again.

*[Exit within.]**[SIR HUBERT and FRANTZ come forward.]*

SIR HUBERT.

Remarked you, Frantz, the churls gave me no cheer?

FRANTZ.

I did my lord; but 'twas your nobleness,  
The which they'll shrink before, e'en as the mists  
Fly at the morning sun.

SIR HUBERT.

Well, reckon it so.

Hark ye, Frantz;—mingle with these villagers;  
Speak of the love thy master bears them all.  
Smile and make promises, not in my name,—  
But whisper in their ears, Sir Hubert's thus;  
And then if thus go well, to that, and more;  
Then to comparisons in plainer terms;  
So groping in the dark we'll probe their love,  
And creep another step.

FRANTZ.

I will, my lord.  
The daughter of mine host's a sprightly lass,  
I'll ply the girl on this.

SIR HUBERT.

So shall my purpose  
Be measured, for the boors' good will once caught,  
I see no greater risk. *[Thunders.]* Let's in, good Frantz,  
A storm's at hand, and we should scarce be seen  
In sush close conference. *[Seeing Reynel.]*  
Ha! what's that? see!

FRANTZ.

The idiot lad, Reynel Darrant.  
He is dumb.

SIR HUBERT.

Not so. That eye was never dumb.  
It speaks,—there's meaning in't! *[Thunders.]*  
Bring in the boy. *[To Reynel.]* He sleeps.

*[Sir Hubert goes in; Frantz follows, beckoning to Reynel.  
Dumb show, and music. Reynel takes up Ernest, and  
wrapping his own mantle round his head, bears him off,  
still sleeping.]*

SCENE III.—*In a poor Cottage.*

[*Alice discovered, busied at a table covered with fresh gathered herbs.*]

ALICE.

This for the shepherd's daughter ;—the disease  
Looses its hold : my cure will be complete.  
Ground ivy, mountain mint, wild campion.  
“ So the physician may administer  
“ Sure antidotes to others, and himself  
“ Abandon to despair ;—the astrolabe  
“ Forewarns the stranger's, but the master's fate  
“ In mystery so dark and wild involves,  
“ Defying all revealing, that the student,  
“ Wooing the phantom he hath sought to scare,  
“ And terror worn with dread imaginings,  
“ At last falls victim to the inquisition.”  
Do I these simples cull  
For others' wounds, and can no medicine find  
To renovate this withered hope, and heal  
The immedicable sores which, ever open,  
Discharge fresh sorrows on my tortured peace,  
Making the very night a term of woe !  
My father, on his dying lips,  
Gather'd his powers to chide, but heaven attuned  
The word into the music of a blessing,  
And they, disarmed of curses, closed in silence,  
Striving but one name to articulate,  
The which his eye alone could syllable.  
Dead, dead, at rest,—the innocent are lost,  
And death has left the cause to mourn alone !

## BALLAD.

My home was by the mountain,  
Where summer ever glows  
On the vineyard and the fountain,  
The myrtle and the rose :  
My childhood like a flash of light  
That falls on some lone stream,  
To gild it for the moment bright,  
And leave it like a dream !

He told me I was beautiful,  
And purer than the snow !  
But tears will make the bright eye dull,  
And mark the smoothest brow.—  
He prais'd the blush of virtue o'er  
My artless cheek that came ;  
So deep a tinge it never wore  
As now it bears in shame !

Now silence fills the lonely hall,  
 And mirth is stranger there ;  
 Nor ivy clothes the ruin'd wall,  
 Nor echo strikes the ear ;  
 For ruin and decay have laid  
 A curse upon the view,  
 And the same hand that curs'd the shade,  
 Struck down the mortal too !

[*Distant storm heard. Enter REYNEL, with ERNEST still sleeping. He makes signs of silence, and lays him down on the hearth, watching by him.*]

" Born to participate the mother's curse,  
 " And bear the scourge who reck'd not of the crime !  
 " One was of vice, and one of virtue born ;  
 " An idiot one,—one rich in noble gifts :"  
 How instinct prompts them to fraternal love !  
 And is it strange ? They but obey the will,  
 And answer the appeal, of nature——No.  
 Behold him !—look at him without the yearnings  
 Of fond maternity, and then pronounce  
 That judgment harsh which falls upon the guiltless !  
 " But no ; the proper channel of requital,  
 " By justice never-erring, is decreed ;  
 " How should the proper channel of reproof  
 " Be chosen and mark'd out by the transgressor ?"  
 The village children call him, " Silly Reynel !"  
 He trims their hobby horses, mends their toys,  
 Partakes their noisy sports, and fights their battles :  
 And all our scanty livelihood is gained  
 By gathering healing herbs from dangerous rocks,  
 And these dispensing to sick villagers.

[*Enter HAL.*]

HAL.

Pardon my intrusion, Lady Alice. I would enquire what parting service I can render, since you still refuse me permission to reveal your place of retreat to my lord.

ALICE.

What ! so soon wearied, honest falconer, of your new lord ? Will you then desert your youthful pupil ? leave him in strange hands ?

HAL.

Under rumour of my departure, I shall await here my lord's return. One word, lady. Beseech you, let me greet my lord with tidings of success. His last commands to me were to seek you, and to keep strict watch over your native hamlet, in case you should return thither. He little thinks of your near retreat and your sufferings, and his peace is surely broken by your loss to his health's destruction, though he never complains aloud. Grief, Lady Alice, is killing him ! Would I had never promised secrecy.

ALICE.

Ah, little knows the heart unused to sin,  
 What sufferings to contrition should belong !  
 What think you for I torture thus myself  
 With poverty, degrading to my rank ?  
 By residence so near to him, that oft'  
 I see the pallor on his brow and lip,  
 When none is nigh beside, and catch his sighs,  
 To echo and re-echo them again,  
 From the inmost recesses of my soul ?  
 Why should the tear to penitence pertain,  
 But to wash out our sin by suffering ?  
 Regard me still, as you remember me  
 In your first memory. A voice of warning  
 Bids me, in meekness, wait a heavier blow  
 Than all before !

HAL.

Noble lady ! Forgive me if I have urged this suit too far through  
 any ignorance. Promise me yet, lady, to grant me one request. I  
 make it for myself, and humbly ; refuse me not.

ALICE.

If it will do thee service, honest falconer,  
 And lie within my gift, count thy request  
 Already granted and fulfilled.

HAL. [*Kneeling and offering a purse.*]

You have been reared to luxury. I had reserved this for another  
 purpose ; I have no use for it now ; it is the gain of honest toil.  
 Accept it, lady.

[*He rises. Alice takes the purse and produces another.*]

ALICE.

At his departure, on accession to  
 The dignities of his inheritance,  
 Promising quickly to return, Lord Ernest  
 Left with me this. He did return to find  
 A wretch to pity and abhor, though not  
 Despise.—Remorse and penance had effected  
 What absence and neglect had never wrought.  
 I fled ! This gift, his last,—here is the price,  
 Untold ! untouch'd !—for every coin's accurs'd  
 For me ! Thy generous act was kindly meant ;  
 Retain thy honest gains : [*Slipping her purse within.*]  
 Heaven trebles them.

[*Enter FRANTZ, in haste.*]

FRANTZ.

Where is the young Lord Ernest ?  
 Out, drivelling wretch ! What ho ! my lord !

[*Reynel makes signs.*]

[*Shaking Ernest roughly. He wakes. Reynel, leaping forward, seizes Frantz, and dashes him to the other side of the stage, standing over Ernest in an attitude of protection.*]

FRANTZ. [*Rushing on him with his dagger.*]

Down, imp!

[*As he rushes on, Alice throws herself between; he thrusts her aside, and is about to strike, when Hal, catching his arm, again hurls him back.*]

HAL.

Unworthy coward! Your weapon, to a boy?

FRANTZ.

"Another idiot? Oh, I must dissemble. [*Aside.*] I meant the lad no harm, good falconer; but sooth, his arm is dexterous as your own at a throw; he must have learned of you; is he of your teaching? As for this matter, Sir Hubert bade me seek the youth, being afraid lest the storm should injure his (imperial little) head. My blood was hot; I honestly confess it. Your hand.

HAL. [*Eyeing him from head to foot.*]

"Tut, tut, man;—take it, or leave it, as it please you. Hold! If you do take it, you are a knave!—If you do not, why you are knave and coward to boot!

FRANTZ.

"I see how it is, we are rivals! Let it pass.

[*Exit.*]

HAL.

"I know this man, lady; he'll to Sir Hubert, and I must be there to meet him. Be pleased to follow me, young sir, with Reynel. Lady, I take my leave."

[*Exit Hal, Reynel, and Ernest.*]

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*In the Castle ; the Armory.*[SIR HUBERT *alone.*]

SIR HUBERT.

Long have I watched and waited, till thou, Fate,  
Should single me from out the crush of fools ;  
And now, thy favor gain'd, smile ne'er again  
If I neglect the chance, or lose the prize.

" With fortune goes ambition, hand in hand,

" To conscience deaf, and blind to obstacle,

" And I will rush on opportunity

" As on a foe, to gripe whose jealous throat

" We watch thro' long-enduring patient years,

" Despairing of the chance,—but gaining which,

" We hold and hug it with a greedy clutch,

" Fearful lest some mischance or counter power

" Rush in to mar the unconsummated event."

The proper heir am I of Ravencourt !

True, not by birthright, but by dignity !

And that is nature's own,—the prior right.

Be silent, conscience ! What though he be my brother ?

Brother's a name, and fortune made us foes.

I love him not, and owe him nought ;—affection

Should from affection spring, not ties of blood.

When did the thistle bear the luscious peach ?

And when did injury, contempt, neglect,

Beget affection in a heart, like mine,

Alive and sensitive to slightest scorn ?

And what can conscience bring ? He did despise me,

Neglected, spurn'd me ! Is the cause not righteous,

Thou brawler ! hate to hate, and love to love ?

[*Enter FRANTZ in haste.*]

Well man : how now ? There's tidings in thy looks.

Where is the boy ?

FRANTZ.

'Tis not the boy, my lord :

This falconer, that leaves the servitorship,

Sees through your purposes ; your schemes are nought

Unless he be removed, and speedily.

I stumbled on him unawares, and heard

Part of his thoughts disjointedly confessed,

Wherein he swore himself to thwart and frustrate

Your every movement.

SIR HUBERT.

Ah, my gentle Frantz,—  
This smells like rivalry. Come, come, confess,  
Some loop and bodice lies behind thy story.

FRANTZ.

Your penetration never sleeps, Sir Hubert.  
You treat this matter lightly; I can show  
You cause for more immediate despatch.  
This rivalry it is that will undo us.  
For, speaking of myself, the rascal said,  
Him will I set and pay this very night!  
On that take ship for Flanders, and expose  
Sir Hubert to the Baron. And, my lord,  
However this put on a vaunting look,  
Coming from one that seems an idle quarter,  
Rest you assured that 'tis the kind of man,  
A fellow of blunt speech and honest seeming,  
On whose report your brother will rely  
With confidence implicit. Saw you not  
How, when your brother drew this man apart,  
They went to whisper, and lay mouth to ear,  
As if disclosing confidences?

SIR HUBERT.

Well?—

FRANTZ.

Need you further proof? When I went out  
To seek the boy, I found him in the hut  
Of a widow, the idiot's mother, whom you saw.  
She and her half infernal son are leagued  
In cause; of that anon.—I found young Ernest  
And would have brought him, when this falconer  
Came in, and roundly swearing, struck me down.  
I 'scaped him, or i' truth he had murdered me!  
By oaths most impious and terrific, he  
Is bound to vengeance, and be sure, Sir Hubert,  
He'll track you narrowly.

SIR HUBERT.

Ho, boy! Who waits there? Should he come presently,

[Enter PAGE.]

We'll entertain him. Bid me two retainers  
Wait in the corridor, and when I call,  
Spring sudden in this chamber.  
Hark ye Frantz,  
I'm wrong'd, good friend: I'm deeply wrong'd.

FRANTZ.

Ay, so  
Is many another man, my lord, not only

[Exit Page.]



In substance, but regard, repute, my lord.  
Repute !

SIR HUBERT.

Tut, tut, man ; where's the policy  
In jibbing at a slack rein ?

FRANTZ.

Why, my lord,  
Where there's no policy there may be will.  
I will not to be hack'd and made a tool,  
Then called in question for the means of labour.  
The jade that hath a gall will kick from habit ;  
He that would use me, must esteem me too,  
Not judging from the colouring of my deeds,  
But weighing me by service for repute.  
As now, with what consistency of conduct  
Could I, being leagued in all your purposes,  
Ta'en to your counsels, sworn to secrecy,  
Give up the burthen of your works, because  
Your plots and needs affined not with my own ?  
Who charges me with petty purposes  
As rivalry,—in services not my own,  
Shall lack my hand to work him second good.  
Wherefore, let me impress you in this matter,  
However my own purposes may answer  
The bent of your suspicions, so you are served,  
Question me nothing, nor entreat my matters.  
I will not be accused.

SIR HUBERT. [*Frankly.*]

I'm glad of this. I know thee now by heart.  
Thy worthiness shall make thee minister  
To all my thoughts, devices, and intentions.  
“ I take it there's as much of friendship in  
“ A deep and spirit-stirring plot, where knaves  
“ Assemble for an end, as in your schools  
“ Where Latin mottoed monks and sickly students  
“ Trim the slow taper of conspiracy  
“ For the world's benefit. 'Tis a test of reason.  
“ Two rogues, confiding each for his own advantage,  
“ In point of faith, may venture to defy  
“ A score of men who, being exempt from profit  
“ On their own part, nor therefore stirred to win  
“ The cause they advocate, pledge head and hand  
“ To work the public service ; for community,  
“ Being niggardly, and high in common opinion,  
“ Is apt to greet her creditors with jibes,  
“ And mock their suits, unless preferred by power ;  
“ Exacting, as she does, conformity  
“ With all her rigid laws and ordinances,

" Yet loath to pay an equable demand.  
" Now Frantz, good Frantz, we should be bound together ;  
" Because our separate interests do converge  
" Into one common path and centre." Listen.  
Now, giving you my confidence and trust,  
Suppose my friend,—that is, a former friend,—  
Had done me an irreparable injury,  
The stain and memory of which, upon  
My private mind, no after compensation  
Could wipe out or destroy. Did I perceive,  
After long years of patient solitude,  
A way to right this unforgotten wrong,  
Should I forbear reprisal? Now, your creed!

FRANTZ.

My creed, Sir Hubert? I learnt it in a school  
Where precept moulds itself to inclination.  
No man, that knows my character, would say  
I ever did forget a wrong or insult,  
Much less forgive it!

SIR HUBERT.

Thou art of my thinking.  
But then, perhaps he was your enemy  
That wrong'd you; and you might despise him for it,  
Or do him honour for his natural hate.  
Now, man, I tell you this—he was my friend!  
I had not robbed him of his wife, or land,—  
I had not perjured him,—betrayed him,—no!  
Nor injured him by act, or word, or thought;  
But spent my nights in plotting for his good.  
His welfare was my own, I loved him more,  
Because that others loved not me. I loved him  
Not for my private gain, but for himself.  
He leant on me, and I was his support;  
I spoke for him when others did assail,  
And when his arm was weak, I fought for him.  
He gained a title, which, by equity,  
Was half my own; riches and honours too;  
I murmur'd not, but was the first to echo  
The music of ambition in his ear!  
All this I did, and more, for I did love him!  
What then? One day he sought t' impose on me  
A work beneath us both to do; I did  
Object,—I did remonstrate,—but in vain.  
One look—it had been done; but he—commanded!  
I say he did command;—I laugh'd at him!  
Forsooth, he'd be obey'd! Then I did taunt him,  
With base ingratitude; he call'd me coward;  
Struck me, and drew my blood;—and after this,

Slandered me in the public mart!—and he  
Was my own brother!

FRANTZ.

'Tis but natural :  
Even the worm will turn on its aggressor.

SIR HUBERT.

I steel'd my heart to suffering ; since then  
We scarce have met. The world has been my tutor,  
Shall I forget the lessons she has taught ?  
Thou know'st I'm poor ; not so my brother ; Frantz,  
His superfluity were wealth to me !  
Methinks 'tis hard I share not his abundance.  
Eh ? Why he calls me " brother," at his need ;  
Tush, man ; he speaks me sooth,—but what of that ?  
Should one appear before my open eyes,  
And say, " Sir, by your leave I'll strangle you ;"  
Should I consent because he spake me pleasant ?  
Would'st have me jostled, like a woman, out  
Of justice by a soothing tongue ?

FRANTZ.

What would you ?

SIR HUBERT.

Reprizal—benefit—and thy reward.  
It goes against my conscience : there's an essence  
Which I did bring with me from Araby  
A subtle drug ;—remote in its effect.  
'Twould kill a stalwart man, much less a boy !  
And for—the father,—now, last night I dreamed  
He died on his return.

FRANTZ.

Reward ?

SIR HUBERT.

One fourth my actual revenue.  
Hush ! we'll take further counsel. Now this babbler.

[Enter HAL with ERNEST.]

Away, boy ? [Throws Ernest across the stage ; he goes out.  
Crossing to Hal.

Is this the man that dares calumniate  
Hubert of Ravencourt ?

HAL.

What lie is this ?

SIR HUBERT.

Enough ! a dangerous traitor. Ho, without there !

[Enter RETAINERS, REYNEL behind.]

HAL.

I would be heard, Sir Hubert.

SIR HUBERT.

Convey your prisoner to the keep.

HAL.

Hold! Here is the seal ring of the baron. I will pass free!

SIR HUBERT.

Why stare ye so to hear a madman talk?

Is there a talisman within the ring?

Seize him!

*[They lay hold on him; he keeps them both at bay, when Frantz captures him behind, the badge falling from his arm in the struggle, which Reynel snatches up. Hal looking round and perceiving Reynel, throws to him the ring, and Reynel goes out.]*

SIR HUBERT.

Ha, that was good! Now hence with him.

HAL.

Sir Hubert, have a care!

SIR HUBERT.

Give me no words, sirrah; guard the ruffian well.

A care, forsooth,—move on, we'll tend him well.

*[Exit Hal, guarded, Sir Hubert following.]*

FRANTZ.

Ha, ha, a doughty hero!

Now let me ponder o'er my deeper business.

Hurrah for the stiletto!

One quarter of his revenue, that's well:

By stratagem 'tis half. I'll then compel

Another half by threats of future deeds;

That done, Sir Hubert's self, a dastard, bleeds!

Now on this English wench my art to prove,

My plans secured, I'll give a thought to love.

*[Exit.]*SCENE II.—*Before the Wheatsheaf.**[Enter DAME THORN, KATIE behind.]*

DAME.

Oh, the day! Come hither, hussy; stand and look me in the face. How did'st come by these bracelets? Nay, no blushing and stammering; why turn away thy face but for shame's sake?

KATIE.

The bracelets?

DAME.

Ay, the bracelets, shilly-shally. Art turn'd deaf at the words, or would'st gain time to make a fib? Oh, ye saints, who'd be a parent? Katie, I'm sadly afraid of thee: truth's a jewel in a poor man's legacy, then trifle not with me, child, in lies, but confess.

KATIE. [*Kissing her.*]

Dear mother.

DAME.

Dear not me! Off with you to your mate; a hopeful lass makes a hopeful mate. Dishonest and worthless!

KATIE.

Stay! stay!

DAME.

Oh, if I could have foreseen it in you a child-in-arms, mother though I was to you, I'd have strangled you in the swaddling clothes! That I should have reared you to it! But no; 'tis not on my side, we're a honest family; and surely 'tis not on your father's; that were worse than treason to his blood! His father was a yeoman such as never bore staff! I always thought you over gay and lightsome of manner, but, St. Chrysostom, to be a thief!

KATIE.

Thief?

DAME.

Ay, thief, girl! How else could'st thou have gotten possession of such a thing? Did't dig it out o' the earth, or did it drop from the sky? Only to think on it turns my poor weak head! The truth I say;—for stolen them thou must, unless, indeed, that springald up yonder has been at work to tamper with thy maidenhood, after turning thy brain first. May he be hanged and I live to see it withal!

KATIE.

Oh, Frantz! Oh, Hal! But I won't speak. [*Aside.*]

DAME.

Signs are signs. Was't not love making with him, unlike any other maiden, when the moon was on the withies t'other night? Signs are signs, I say, and the scandal's talked of in the village, till the neighbour's nod turns to a wink and a stare, and the very serving lads that lick a living of our plates, will soon learn, i' place of doffing their caps, to wag their fingers at our very doors; and woe's the child, when folks turn up their noses at the father!

KATIE.

And what clown dare turn up his nose, mother, at the good name of Adam Thorn?

DAME.

Little's the good, the fair name of Adam Thorn will do ye, and ye've no fair name of your own. Ugh, thou lack-noddle and foolish wench!

KATIE.

Master Frantz is——

DAME.

As arrant a rogue as ever wore another man's doublet!

KATIE.

Oh, mother!

DAME.

And oh! daughter. An improper knave, I say; a fellow with a laugh on his lips and a trick in his eye,—of smooth tongue and villainous heart; a villain by birth and nature, for are not all your foreigners barbarians, and their women gypsies? I say that man is a knave, Katie; and Sir Hubert himself is no better.

KATIE.

Sir Hubert!

DAME.

Ay, Sir Hubert. Think ye I fear to say so because that he hath the word of the high-born? A straw for the man who, stript of that fustian, is naked of all other commendation! I speak in plain words, Katie, taking nothing to myself for book knowledge, or any kind of craft, but my own; only let me fall foul of either of these two, in my own way, and an' I do not cook up for their palates the sour side of a dish o' sorrel, never hearken to my word again. Was not poor Alice Darrant driven abroad yesterday by this very varlet, and obliged to come to me for shelter? And shelter she shall too, so long as a bolting o' thatch covers the old Wheatsheaf, despite of Sir Hubert or the good king himself, the saints bless him.

[Enter ALICE from within.]

Would ye were like your brother Davy, with little brains but clean conscience. He does us honour; but you are like to prove a very plague of Egypt!

ALICE.

Are you angered, kind mother? Let me, as your guest, become your peace-maker. My young friend in tears? Leave her to me, good dame, though but yesterday I became an inmate of your house, Katie and I are as old acquaintance in little matters of quiet counsel, and methinks she has no cause to withdraw her former trust.

DAME.

Be't so, Mistress Alice. But hark ye, girl—if the talk of Mistress Alice avail not more than that of your poor mother, who has reared you from your child's cradle and upwards,—hark you this, we'll send you away a hundred miles to the great stone convent, full of nothing but crabbed nuns and rats, where you'll be thrust up to the neck in sackcloth and ashes, and kept in a mouldy vault to fatten on fasting, and praying, and now and then a taste of bread and ditch-water! No caterwauling to the moon there, I promise ye. 'Twas not so when I was a girl. Fie on you! I' faith, had I but wandered abroad after toll of curfew, my grandame would have fastened me to the horseblock for a week. I dare not have run in the face of my mother; but the young of these days do miracles enough to strike angels dumb at sight of 'em.

[Exit within.]

ALICE.

Come, Katie, entrust me with your secrets. I am your friend.

D

KATIE. [*Weeping.*]

What to do,—I am the most—unhappy—creature—under the sun!

ALICE.

Indeed; Tell me the cause. I have learnt somewhat of sorrow, and they who have suffered from the sting of misfortune, can often-times furnish an antidote for its venom.

KATIE.

I feel, I don't know how :—I am poorly, but don't know where :—I feel a pain, but can't tell whereabouts to find it :—I am unhappy. Heigho! Heigho!

ALICE.

What evil has befallen you? You have health on your cheek; well blest in parents, kindred, home, and friends; for my part——

KATIE.

Yes, I know all that; but then, I can't have my own way in very many things. I can't do as I like, Mistress Alice.

ALICE.

And is this all your grief? Bethink you how many are there in the world who can do so, and thereby are bereft of all good advisers! who stumble over the precipices and pitfalls of the world, because they have no friend to warn them from their brinks! This is cause for happiness, girl; try again.

KATIE.

'Tis not that. Heigho! Heigho!

ALICE.

Can I tell your own secret, Katie? Do you fancy yourself to be in love, and are you ready to throw your heart to the finest and idlest young fellow that will stretch forth his hands to catch it? Will you hear me patiently?

KATIE.

Oh yes. It is just that.

ALICE.

Listen! A virtuous woman's heart is her greatest treasure;—one, that once sold, cannot be redeemed! Much it behoves her to be thrifty in its expenditure, for its advantages, like those of the Silver Talent of old, depend upon its application. Some cast it wantonly away, as spendthrifts do their means, and live to curse their ignorance of its value, when ruin'd and beggared by its loss. Others, observing the contrary extreme, and shutting up their treasure from the eyes and knowledge of the world, rob it of its use! They keep it as misers do their hoards, not to benefit others,—not to benefit themselves,—but because it is GOLD!

KATIE.

But I am not like these. I shall bestow——

ALICE.

A virgin heart;—a most precious jewel, girl! Think well on the risk you run, and remember, that from one *false step* there's no appeal. Mark you the medium. A prudent maiden will neither misuse it like

the spendthrift, nor abuse it like the miser; but seeking a tried and trusty keeper, will render up the casket at his petition who most values its contents, and will apply them to the best advantage!

KATIE.

Ah, Mistress Alice, you mean me well, I am sure of it. But I hope, dear Mistress Alice, you won't think I am wasting my Silver Talent on a good-for-nothing. Oh, I know better; I am no chicken in the world, I assure you. Why, I am not so young, Mistress Alice,—eighteen! next St. Valentine's day; quite out of leading-strings. Then, I've weighed the matter over and over, very prudently indeed! Nor am I, after all, a bad match, you know.

ALICE.

Perhaps I am wrong. Two paths lie before you; see your way clearly before pursuing it. The most seductive path often proves fatal: for though youth trips lightly along when pleasure lines the way, the unwary step of the dancer is whirling her unconsciously forward to the brink of a fearful steep, and ruin lies beneath!

KATIE.

Ha, ha, ha, you are quite mistaken now. Why, Frantz is such a gentleman bred! I've the greatest confidence in him. He says he would not break his word for mines of gold and silver! He tells me his honour is worth more to him than the riches of King Solomon's temple and all the rest of the Indies put together! For my part, I will pledge my life for his honour as a gentleman.

ALICE.

Try him once again,—and be assured! Then can you never accuse yourself of your own disappointment. But see, here comes Reynel.

[*Goes out.*]

KATIE.

It is Reynel. Oh, thank the stars, my brother Davy is not like Reynel Darrant. I should kill him if he could not speak.

[*Re-enter ALICE with REYNEL.*]

ALICE.

Where is my water-mallow and agrimony? No herbs nor flowers? How hast been employed, truant?

[*Reynel looks anxiously round.*]

KATIE.

What hast lost, poor youth? He does not look on the floor, but about. He has lost somebody. His mind is disturbed, Mistress Alice.

ALICE.

Something has occurred. What holds he with such care betwixt his fingers? let me look: it is his ring!

KATIE.

What is the matter? Holy saints! what makes you stagger and go so pale? Shall I call out for somebody? Help! help! ho, help!



ALICE.

Hold!—Hither, Reynel; what is here? the falconer's badge! Here has been mischief, boy. Where is Hal, the falconer?

KATIE.

Oh, I shall faint! Where is Hal? Where's the need of asking him? He has murdered him and stolen the silver badge! Alas! [*Wringing her hands.*] Help! help! help!

[*Enter DAME and ADAM THORN from within.*]

ADAM.

Hey day! who is dead? What's the matter? Where a woman is there is always a squall! who'd go to sea with 'em? Why Katie, and Mistress Alice, and Reynel, what's on the move now? What has frightened you all? Can nobody speak? What has frightened ye? Have ye seen a cock-roach, or a flea? Or heard a death-watch, or a cricket?

DAME.

Death-watch and cricket! no; 'tis that old desperate white bull of yours, Adam Thorn. Twenty times in the sleigh, and once in the slaughter, and who'll pay the damages, Adam Thorn? Pen him up in the fold, I say, or I'll have his horns off, before he becomes the death of somebody. Last Lent was twelvemonth——

ADAM.

Devil take thy preach, dame, I would his horns were i' thy throat! The white bull's at Farmer Breeder's; I saw him in stall myself not a while since. Hold thy tongue, and let Mistress Alice read us this riddle, she'll be better by and by, maybe.

KATIE.

Give me some water. Loosen my bodice, mother. Oh, Hal! Hal! Hal!

ADAM.

Hal? What has befallen Hal?

KATIE.

He's murdered! he's murdered!

DAME and ADAM.

Murdered? Hal, the falconer?

DAME.

I always said Hal would be killed. Last Easter Monday was a twelvemonth——

ALICE.

Stay,—stay: give us your forbearance. Reynel, how came you with these?

KATIE.

And I dreamed so. The wretched creature has murdered him, and hidden his corpse!

ADAM.

Tush, girl.

KATIE.

Or eaten it.

ADAM.

Peace, I say!

ALICE.

My boy? No! Good Master Thorn, await; kind friends I implore your patience, and your silence. This falconer was Reynel's oldest friend. How should the boy injure those he loves? How, besides, should his strength avail against the arm of such a man?

DAME.

Surely not. I don't believe it.

ALICE.

How he appeals from face to face! as though he would say "Question me,—I will explain." Reynel, whence came this? It is the baron's seal ring.

ADAM.

Faith, it is! I know it well.

DAME.

His very crest of arms. A griffin on one claw with fire and smoke, and signifying the victory of Sir Greville, which was of Ravencourt, over the pagans in the holy land; last Ascension-day was two hundred—and how many more years.

KATIE.

Then the lord baron himself is murdered as well. Alas! alas! I shall put on widow's weeds for Hal!

ALICE.

No, no. It is not so. The ring my-boy,—had you it of the baron? No. He points to the badge, and lays them together;—both came from the falconer. Some harm has befallen his friend! I tell you he could not have harmed him, for he was ever gentle and not wayward. Say, Reynel, what is become of Hal? Ho! He clasps his wrists,—folds his arms,—and droops his head down on his breast. Is he a prisoner? Look! He is! He is placed in confinement by Sir Hubert, on the accusation of Frantz!

DAME.

Surely. Now, Adam Thorn, what think you of Sir Hubert? We shall yet see the kirtle take the gloss out of the doublet!

ADAM.

Mistress Alice, look to the house; we'll see this matter righted. Look to the house, dame. What's the lad's offence? Tut, tut, what's his offence?

[Exit ADAM.]

DAME.

Aye, aye, on to Sir Hubert, Adam; the good Sir Hubert! Come in the house, Reynel, for a cup of that good canary. Come, Mistress Alice.

[Exit within, Dame, Alice, and Reynel.]

KATIE.

It's of no use sorrowing for Hal; just now is the time I promised to meet Mr. Frantz in the copse behind the castle. I shall hear all

the truth, he will not deceive me. Poor Hal! I thought I felt a sort of respect for Hal, once,—only think of that! but then, as Frantz tells me, I was but a child, and did not understand the poetry of love. That means the bracelets. As for love without the poetry, then, 'tis good for nothing. As well to have a fine house without a roof or a door,—or a bran new milking pan with a bottom full of holes. Yes, I'll take Mistress Alice's advice, as far as it agrees with my own. I will not bury my Silver Talent in a napkin!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*A Forest; in the foreground an old Oak, hollow in the centre.*

[*Enter KATIE.*]

KATIE.

This is the spot, under the old tree. I'm almost afraid of it; there are so many horrible things said about this tree! What an odd-looking, mis-shapen old thing it is, with those knots in the bark, looking like so many eyes, prying into other people's business! Suppose those knots, now, to be eyes of the wood-witches that inhabit the hollow of the trunk. But good fairies, they say, watch over lovers, so I am safe. How lonely! Very strange! I have met Hal under this very tree, time on time, and never felt frightened till now. Poor Hal! I think I see him, fretting himself to death in his prison, like some wild bird caught in a cage, that, seeing his mate take wing and soar away merrily, beats his heart out against the wires. But where can Frantz be? Oh, yonder he is; crawling under the trees like a black slug to a young cabbage leaf. Is he indifferent, or does he think to come slyly to my side, and catch me talking of him to myself, or cutting his name on a tree? I'll hide myself for a moment in the hollow of the oak, to watch his motions. [*Conceals herself in the Oak.*]

[*Enter SIR HUBERT.*]

SIR HUBERT.

Strange paradox of human nature, this;  
If he who covets that another owns,  
Gaining his wishes, lack the power to enjoy!  
Possession and her blandishments look less  
In my esteem; or is desire grown slack  
Through surfeit? for possession should convey  
The pleasures, all we do accredit. No;  
'Tis here, 'tis here. We do miscalculate  
And over rate our tasks! Within the brain  
Of man, and all inherent with his nature,  
Exists a swelling and deep-rooted germ,—  
Desire to gain,—excel,—achieve,—and conquer.  
Slaves to its endless dictates, men do seek

Means of obedience, and not finding measures  
Assorted to the loftiness and breadth  
Of their conceptions and their powers together,  
Out of their minds some object do select  
Whereon their powers may find employ, and such,  
Being exalted to a pride, they clothe  
With obstacles, false difficulties, and  
Be sure, commensurate advantages ;  
Till, having swoll'n this pigmy adversary  
Into a thing of monstrous bulk, they turn,  
Panting and spent with needless opposition,  
And lo ! the trophy is a shred ! the toil  
A waste ! the honor a delusion !

" Yet,

" Possession is not barren in estate,

" But hath her joys, and triumphs we may well

" Enumerate with pride. For is't no joy

" To fatten on success, and feed the mind

" On its own labors,—their hard-earned results

" And produce ? Is't no victory over fate

" To feel ourselves in conscience recognized

" High lords and masters of our own desires,

" Not time-serves !—not dancers of attendance

" On fortunes harlotries ?

KATIE. [*From the tree.*]

It is Sir Hubert !

SIR HUBERT.

" The scene was fair, rich, passing beautiful ;—

" This proud domain and goodly thriving lands

" Were noble ! noble past compare ! But that

" Was when they were another's and I envied them ;

" And in the change of their allegiance, now,

" Methinks their very aspect seems transform'd,

" And o'er the forest and the gay champaign

" Shades dark as Hybla's, gathering thick and near,

" Oppress my sight and render what was fair,

" Unpleasing, harsh, and pregnant with foreboding !

" Another day, and they salute me lord !

" Why, then, the fruit being ripe, would I delay

" Loath to cut down the ready crop and fain

" To leave it stand, so fair, another sun ?

" This is not pity ; pity breeds remorse,

" Touching the heartstrings to a plaintive strain ;

" Weans the soul's motive, pausing on the event,

" And warps and shrivels up as palsy-stricken

" The intrepid arm of dangerous undertaking."

Why not rush on ? I see't. Methinks I am like

The woodman, who, with brawny arm uplift,

Surveyeth, axe in hand, some famous tree!  
 I pause to measure, wonder, and admire!—  
 To view my work,—but shall I pause to spare?  
 Conscience,—seek not to oust me of the gains!  
 Being false, I more suspect thee, seeming fair.  
 By this, the work 's achieved.

[*Enter a MESSENGER.*]

MESSENGER.

Sir Hubert,—

SIR HUBERT.

Why  
 Am I disturbed?

MESSENGER. [*Giving letters.*]

Letters, Sir Hubert, from  
 My lord the baron.

SIR HUBERT.

Thy lord the baron! [*Pause.*]  
 Letters! [*Agitated*] how? letters? where are they? let me see them.  
 Unsuperscribed, oh, fool! A very blank! [*Looking at them.*]

[*Opening them slowly.*]

Patience! or they'll condemn me in a lie.  
 Here is the saving clause, here is the blot,  
 A stain—but dark as blood! a blot and a stain,  
 Aye, many stains, and lines that one would think  
 Writ with the sword's point, all so roughly lettered.  
 And is't not white again? By heaven, 'tis white,—  
 And now grows black once more! For now appears  
 That in these words, a curse on their inventor!  
 I read the framing of a cunning deed,  
 Digested well, complete in every form,  
 But—fools! unthrifty hirelings!—incomplete!  
 Unsigned, unsealed and waste! Oh, Nemesis,  
 Was e'er design so spoil'd in execution?  
 Away, thou vender of ill news! thou barren  
 Unlicensed mercury!

[*Exit Messenger.*]

I am gone mad.  
 But such is life,  
 And such its strange vicissitudes. Throughout,  
 Uncertain ever, like the highset vane,  
 Man is but sport for every fickle wind!  
 First, in the calm serenity of youth,  
 Comes, with the whirl of passion in that season,  
 A fearful hurricane, in whose wild durance  
 Who knows a place of rest? Then comes a change:  
 Fain to repose in everlasting calm,  
 We hope for peace. Some unexpected gust

Again will dash us from the settled point  
Round the wide limits of predestined life,  
To play the shuttlecock 'twixt adverse winds,  
And bend through all the courses of the storm !  
Anon another breeze, from some strange quarter,  
All unexpected, sets us right again.  
And so, from first to last, we run our course,  
Fretted with strifes, and helpless to the end.

[*Leans against the tree.*]

[*Enter FRANTZ.*]

FRANTZ.

Sir Hubert here ?

SIR HUBERT.

Well, sir.

FRANTZ.

I followed you,  
Touching instructions——

SIR HUBERT.

Ay, as to the boy.  
That shows thy zeal. Lord Ravencourt's alive,  
And well !—there's news for you.

FRANTZ.

The fiends ! By what mischance ?

SIR HUBERT.

I know not,—care not,—for I have sworn by all  
The things men swear by, he shall die ! And though  
Here,—on his own home's threshold, face to face,  
I met him, to be pardoned crime by crime,—  
Still, single-handed, arm'd with curses, would I  
Pour down the torrent on his hateful head,  
From heaven and hell invoked, till his weak heart,  
Stabb'd with the weapons of ungrateful words,  
Or poison'd to the core with inward wounds,  
Be drown'd in its own gall, or burst with anguish !

FRANTZ.

Mildly, Sir Hubert ! Words but chafe, not kill.  
No pilot's voice, his hand being off the rudder,  
Can ease the stranding ship, or rule the wind.  
Conception ! Execution ! These are things  
To govern in ambition's world, none else.

SIR HUBERT.

True, true ; but here, devise ; he's on his way ;  
Having gone, he tells me, through Artois, to avoid  
Some border quarrel of the Hainauts. Even  
To-morrow, he writes me to prepare——

FRANTZ.

His welcome.

SIR HUBERT.

Aye.

FRANTZ.

He returns to repossess his own.

SIR HUBERT.

And in so doing dispossesses——us!

FRANTZ.

Another third! I'll so arrange and handle  
This matter, it should move old Scyron's self  
With envy, hearing of its execution.

SIR HUBERT.

Bargain'd, my prince of brigands.  
I have heard it said, that, when a man would err,  
The devil is always fertile in inventions.  
Mark you, it is your bargain.

FRANTZ.

Ay, Sir Hubert:  
But somewhat sterling on account beforehand,  
More sterling than your word.—I speak you bold.

SIR HUBERT.

Tut, tut, my friend, the bolder I esteem thee.  
A document——

FRANTZ.

And under hand and seal.

SIR HUBERT.

Well, well. I'll lend it to thee, like the gamester,  
Yielding unto the doomed and eager novice  
The first delusive chances, and anon,  
Turn up the lucky ace, and win the game. [*Aside.*]  
Hear then; "To-morrow, [*Referring to letters.*] so I calculate,  
By pushing on, unresting day or night,  
I shall reach the forest confines." Ah, good brother.  
There——he must be watch'd and——

FRANTZ.

Bloodily murdered!

SIR HUBERT.

Plague o' the word! Ay, murdered!

KATIE. [*From the tree.*]

Murdered!

SIR HUBERT.

Hush! What noise was that?

FRANTZ.

A raven or an owl, that heard the plan,  
And grunted her approval.

SIR HUBERT.

To expedite this matter, I'll go on,  
Prepare these papers for our signature.  
Make sure, my friend. On your sole arm depend

The profits of success. Set forth to night,  
Disguised, and have thy comrades fitly arm'd  
To overbear resistance. So, Lord Baron!

KATIE.

The Lord Baron!

SIR HUBERT.

Hark! There again. You heard that.

FRANTZ.

A noise?

SIR HUBERT.

Ay, a voice. Was it an echo? No.

FRANTZ.

Surely. These woods are full of echoes.

SIR HUBERT.

Are they so?

I will be gone. But for our younger subject,  
My hand shall rid us that impediment!  
Do thou be sure and speedy; all's on that.  
One blow, one hearty blow,—and then, good Frantz!

FRANTZ.

And then one blow! What dastard wit is his!  
With all the cunning to conceive a crime,  
Without the daring to enact it out.  
By life, the coistrel is unworthy steel!  
He'll better hang; his heart is hard enough  
To turn my dagger's point.

KATIE.

Thy dagger's point.

FRANTZ.

Hell and the devil!

KATIE. [*Discovering herself.*]

Devil!—that's the echo!

FRANTZ.

Where sprung you from?

KATIE.

That tree. I am the echo.

FRANTZ.

The devil's own echo! Thy echo must be silenced. [*Aside.*]  
[*Lightly.*] Well, sweetheart, you did keep appointment, then?

KATIE.

And so shall you,  
To the gallows. Oh, you wolf with many heads,—  
You poisonous snake,—you black, deceiving man,—  
Rascally born villain.  
You maid-entrapping, vain, unconscienced dog!  
You Jew,—thief,—cut-throat,—kidnapper,—you—



FRANTZ.

Hold!

KATIE.

Murder the Lord Baron, eh? This is your honour, that beggars all the wealth in the wide world. Stand by and see a young boy stuck like a chicken by that wicked uncle. This is your goodness. Oh, master Honesty, this is the way you live at court, forsooth? This is the noble, honourable gentleman that would lay claim to Katie Thorn! Oh, ye saints be thank'd for this.

FRANTZ.

Bravo, my cuckoo!—faith, but you rant it well.  
A second maid of Arc there's spirit enow.  
By Jupiter a fiery little Juno!  
You overheard us then.

KATIE.

To every word and whisper.

FRANTZ.

Hear me then. You please my fancy, you are a dashing girl. Quick eye!—bold!—rosy cheek!—pouting lip! Harkye, what I shall disclose. By these adventures Sir Hubert will handle all his nephew's inheritance and his brother's riches. The business over, two thirds of the monies fall to myself, for share; for this, as you heard, I shall hold Sir Hubert's bond, by which the blame, if traced home, falls and fixes on Sir Hubert's shoulders. I'll try her first without violence. [*Aside.*]

KATIE.

Well, that is good! can't you murder him?

FRANTZ.

Murder, my amazon?—we do not call it so. Not that I love thee the less for it,—but for fear of misunderstanding, we call it business,—policy,—we brigands.

KATIE.

Oh you do, do you? I tremble with anger! Oh the villain; I'll get some more out of him. [*Aside.*] I begin to see it, but not clearly. Am I not blind now? However, I'll mend my eyes and ears. Well sir, and then your friend, Sir Hubert.

FRANTZ.

Sir Hubert is a coward at heart, therefore, by threatening him with his bond, I shall force from his terrors all that is necessary for my purposes. That done, I bid adieu to my long exile, and set sail for charming Italy.

KATIE.

How delightfully you have arranged everything.

FRANTZ.

And with you for my sweet companion, Katie,—

KATIE.

I had forgotten that.

FRANTZ.

With such a brave and glory-inspiring lass, how will my lads welcome their chief's return, and cry to be led to the field of honor.

KATIE.

Will they? Humph. Then you murder—I mean you business the Baron and the youth Ernest both to-morrow?

FRANTZ.

In the forest the father, and Sir Hubert's own brave arm will destroy the youth.

KATIE.

Excellent. I wonder if he have any other plan?

FRANTZ.

But now that my love has persuaded me to uncover my plans to you, Katie, be prudent. When once in my own domain your estate shall surpass that of my own wife.

KATIE.

Powers above! This is one way to dispose of my Talent. Are you married then, sir?

FRANTZ.

Unluckily. But I shall love you the more, girl, and you shall retain the freedom that our love can possess, but your marriage never. 'Tis agreed then?

KATIE.

Not quite agreed. A little fool I have been I own; and now you king of villains I'll be even with you on all scores. I am off to the officers.

FRANTZ.

I knew it, do not hurry; you must go with me, Katie, till the booty is secured, and my comrades ready for embarkation.

KATIE.

Eh? was ever such a scoundrel heard of? [*Going.*]

FRANTZ. [*Intercepting her.*]

Be patient, and follow. Your confinement shall be happy.

KATIE.

Impudence! Presumption! Would you dare to carry me off without my consent? Are you a man, sir?

FRANTZ. [*Seizing her by the arm.*]

Voices! Come on.

KATIE. [*He holds her mantle.*]

Hands off! Touch me, wretch! Leave me go, I say! Murder! Help! I'm being murd——ered.

FRANTZ.

Softly, my sweetheart. Now thy echo's silent we'll away.

[*Bears her off struggling.*]

E

SCENE IV.—*Within the Wheatshaf.*[*Enter DAVY, with a lantern and spade.*]

DAVY.

Perdy, now have I gained my manhood, and no more will I be flouted for want of a beard by the women. Mother, Mother Thorn.

[*Calling.*]DAME. [*Within.*]

Anon, Davy; anon, my glory.

DAVY.

What's o'clock, granny?

DAME. [*Entering.*]

Nigh curfew-time, runagate. Where hast been loitering to this time?

DAVY.

I' the churchyard.

DAME.

About what, my chuck?

DAVY.

About as much as I can tell you, granny. First, about the fish for the abbot's luncheon; next, about the flies about the river's end; and next, about the grubs i' the grave trenches, to hook my fish withal; and something have I seen to talk about, granny. Guess me, if you can.

DAME.

What kind of a thing, Davy?

DAVY. [*Coming close to her and shouting.*]

A goblin!

DAME.

Gad-a-mercy, Davy! An oaf, to startle me so. 'Tis a lie.

DAVY.

I? Neither do I lie-a-bed nor abroad, Mother Prickle. Nevertheless, a goblin lay in my eye.

DAME.

Then did he lie in thine eye as he now lieth in thy mouth.

DAVY.

Ask your friar John; an' he say it be no goblin that I saw, never let me gobble a meal for three days to come.

DAME.

Then call up friar John, and let him lay him.

DAVY.

Laid he is; I laid him, flat. Listen you, granny; stand you there, and I'll tell the story.

DAME.

Ay, now my sugar-biscuit, how fell it out?

DAVY.

In this wise:—I, being to fish in the morning, hies me to the graveyard for the bait. Fishes are fond of your grave worms, be-

cause they do feed on the juice of the eye-holes in the death's-heads, granny. One by one I grabbed 'em, till my jorden was full. Rain it did——

DAME.

And blow. Ha, ha, ha.

DAVY.

And out went my candle into the jorden. Then came——

DAME.

What?

DAVY. [*Shouting in her ear.*]

Why, the goblin!

DAME.

Bless the boy! Come closer.

DAVY.

And he cried out, and bade it thunder away.

DAME.

Hush! What was that?

DAVY.

That? That was the goblin. And it did thunder away to its heart's content, granny.

DAME.

Did it lighten after the thunder, Davy?

DAVY.

Ay, blue: sheets of it was the goblin wrap't in;—and rain in floods again. Blue? Blue as your nose, granny.

DAME.

My nose, you rascal?

DAVY.

Hush. You know the stone likeness of Sir Greville, in the church-yard?

DAME.

Ah, the Ravencourt tomb. Strange tales have I heard about that tomb, Davy; the skeleton image.

DAVY.

Well; to that skeleton came the goblin—step!—step!—step!—

DAME.

Ha!

DAVY.

Close by the hole where I was squatted with the jorden; and he nodded to the skeleton on the grave-stone.

DAME.

Kinsfolk!

DAVY.

Most likely.

DAME.

And the goblin nodded to the skeleton on the grave-stone—well, and what then?—go on!

DAVY.

Well, and then——

DAME.

Aye——

DAVY.

The skeleton nodded at him !

DAME.

I said so. Nodded ! Well,—

DAVY.

Nay, stop. I think he nodded at him, but 'twas pitch dark. I won't be sworn the skeleton did not wink his eye at the goblin.—

DAME.

That couldst thou not have seen by reason of the darkness.

DAVY.

But I heard him speak, and call the skeleton his great father, brother, ancestor.

DAME.

Father, brother, and sister?—All in one ? That's another lie, rogue.

DAVY.

I lie not. He was a goblin, maybe a hob-gob-goblin,—three in one. Moreover, he told him, the skeleton, how that he had suckled his brother ancestor's blood with his mother's milk.

DAME.

Mother o' grace, a vampir ! it was a vampir, Davy ; a blood-sucker ! Did'st remember to cross thyself and say thy pater, Davy ?

DAVY.

And my ave. But fast as the words came out of my teeth, the wind drove 'em back again down my throat, till they well nigh had stop'd my breath altogether. Then said the goblin, "This boy must die."

DAME.

Corpus-christie ! What you ?

DAVY.

Me. "He is a thorn at my side," said the goblin. Davy Thorn, at your service, thought I. "To morrow's sun shall set on his grave," said the goblin.

DAME. [*Screaming.*]

Oh, the butcher ! my poor boy !

DAVY.

"In the wood behind the castle," said the goblin. I'll be sure to be out, said I. "And in the same hour perish father and son."——

DAME.

Oh, Adam, Adam !

DAVY.

"Till not a thorn be left. Oh, brother ancestor," said he, "if I leave this," and he kneeled down, "if I leave this undone, I am damned !" And if ye do it for me I am damned, said I ; and upon that I knocked down the goblin with my spade.

DAME.

Oh, another lie !

DAVY.

Let me have never a manhood, an' I did not! To it then we went, for a real battle; but save you, a goblin is no mark for a true man. I belaboured him till he cried, hold! He said I was a fine fellow, and asked who my father was, and putting four broad gold pieces into my hand, he vanished with a "whew!"

DAME.

The saints defend us! a strange story. What was he like, Davy?

DAVY.

As like unto Sir Hubert, as one goblin may liken to another goblin, granny.

DAME.

Sir Hubert, quotha! Let me see the four pieces. Benedicy, a ghost in the likeness of Sir Hubert! that bodeth more mischief, verily; no marvel either. Now, sirrah, give to me that devil's money for payment of the laying him.

DAVY.

What! Is honour not a bargain? On my honour never a coin gave the goblin to me for laying him. For letting him rise, I grant ye one piece of money: item, for my discretion, one piece: item, another to wet my muzzle: item, another by way of present, being the occasion of my coming to manhood, but not a ducat gave the goblin for the fat priests o' Ravencourt. Give ye go'd-e'en, granny prickle. Want my salvation money for father John, do ye? Ha, ha.

[Exit.

DAME.

The boy follows his sister; he gets above my fingers. What will become of us all? And the good lord: heigho! all the village on stilts! Boys bearding their fathers, and girls wagging tongues at their mothers, in daylight, and goblins appearing in the night. Oh, that dreadful Sir Hubert! he will wake some fine day and find himself half way to ———. Oh, Adam. [Enter ADAM THORN.] Well, good man, what news from this castle of Babel?

ADAM.

Mischief's afoot. Heaven's a pity, I am but an old man and a feeble. Hal is like to die, they tell me.

DAME.

Die! O' what?

ADAM.

Honesty. Sir Hubert makes no favourites among men of plain words.

DAME.

And the good falconer——

ADAM.

Is in the jailer's hands to wait Sir Hubert's will: mewed in a stone cage, and perchance condemned to the rope, like a sheep-worrying dog. To-morrow, they say, the baron returns: right welcome shall he be, and glad to right the wronged!

DAME.

Welcome enough, an' he do come. And if he do, ye'll be righted, quotha? Now, mark my words, Master Adam. My London kirtle to a whisp o' straw, an' he do return, there be found men who will denounce thee to my lord; Sir Hubert himself will accuse thee, saying it was to task thy fealty he tried thee at the first. As I say, so take heed; and if thou find not thy leg in a hornet's nest o' the one side, and a quagmire o' the other, never let me rally thee again.

ADAM.

Tut, dame; women make their own evils, and then multiply 'em.

DAME.

So have you said alway; and as often have ye been convicted out of my mouth, Adam. Look to it. Hey-day! where is Katie?

ADAM.

Katie? she's a-bed.

DAME.

A-bed? Thou'rt asleep! Came she not along?

ADAM.

I say she followed us not. Why, where is she now?

DAME.

Oh, goat! you have lost the girl. At this time of the night, too. Davy! Mistress Alice! Dorothy! John! O my child, my favourite child!

ADAM.

Hold, hold.

DAME. [*At the top of her voice.*]

Oh, cold oaken-hearted man. Katie Thorn! Davy, I say! All the house! I'll raise the village for her!

ADAM.

Thou'lt raise the devil.

[*Enter DAVY and SERVANTS in haste.*]

DAVY.

Who calls?

DAME.

Mind ye all, all,—I'll have her found to-night, or 'ware the end on't! My hood! my hood! Such a night! my hood! Quick! spirited away by goblin, maybe. Oh, the blessed virgin! Where shall we go?

DAVY.

Mad, sure enough.

DAME. [*Beating him.*]

Mad, you fool! mad, you half-pate! you chicken! you thorough never-mending fool! Her little finger nail was worth your shallow brains. Out, out, and seek her! [*Pursuing.*]

[*Servants run out.*]

DAVY.

Help! Drive her off! Drive her off! Help! A mad woman!  
Make way there. Help!

*[Exit, followed by Dame.]*

ADAM.

The dame is right; the girl's carried away. Lads, within! Ho,  
lads! your staves and bills. Raise the village! Ho, my men! my  
men! my daughter! Your staves and bills! *[Rushes out.]*

END OF ACT II.



## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Cell in the Keep, with benches of stone and a barred casement. Hal chained to a pillar behind.*

[*Enter FRANTZ bearing KATIE.*]

FRANTZ.

There, sweetheart; a stone couch for one night will be wholesome. In a week our bivouac will be made on the naked rocks; in another week thou'lt be ready for a bed of roses, when we find one. [*Aside.*]

KATIE.

False, pirate; Leman to thee. Sooner shall these nails tear my heart from my bosom, and lay it reeking at thy feet. I abhor thee; I loathe thy presence and thy looks.

FRANTZ.

Fire away, miladi. Honest fellow, how could'st thou have caged a wild magpie like this? She would have clawed out thy heart, too, e're the end of the first week's taming.

HAL.

Rascal! let her go free. Fear not; he dare not detain thee, even though he be villain enough to threaten and plot against a woman. He dare not.

FRANTZ.

Astonishing fool! Mark you my benevolence. To-morrow we sail for Italy. Yonder craft, that my eye now rests upon, flaps her wings for her prizes and her master. You were thrust in a hole, dark, damp, and underground, with no better friends than a legion of rats, and they barely fond enough of you to end your captivity by devouring your hard carcass. I brought you here just now for two compound reasons. First, to assure you that in me you behold the cause of your imprisonment; which assurance you shall say, at some future date, was a receipt in full for the payment of my due vengeance. And second, to show you that I can be a forgiving enemy, and to make you bless my generosity when you shall be inclined to lament your loss of yonder fair vixen. Say thy farewell, falconer, before my return, and take in a stock of fresh air for to-morrow. And you, girl, thank my fondness for thy happiness. Nay, I am not jealous,—embrace him, I say.

HAL.

The baron returns this day. Look for full payment of this right arm on thy dastard head for every villainy it has plotted since thy birth.

FRANTZ.

And think ye, O most cholerick Briton, the Baron *will* return? Will it suit thy calculations that no accident,—mishap,—mischance,—befall thy Lord Baron? Events do happen; men do die at home i' their sober beds; other men do journey to such distances that men

do never hear of them again. All these things do fall out, honest falconer, with all kinds of men. In what differeth your Lord Baron from other men who do travel on long journeys ?

HAL.

Ha !

FRANTZ.

And think you, moreover, good fellow, that my friend, the *honest* falconer,—ha, ha,—should be left to relate his pretty anecdote if the good Lord Baron did return ? Better health to thy penetration i' the next world, should we chance to meet, for a new friendship.

HAL.

Friendship was made for the honest hearts of true men, and thou art an assassin—a common hireling cut-throat !

FRANTZ.

Hold ; tempt me no further to violence, or I shall work you mischief. Had'st thou been free,—and each of us free, man to man, my knife had slit thy gullet. That name is a stain on the soldier's whole profession. Say no more, I warn ye.

HAL.

Leave my sight, then, or I will invent such words as shall gall thee worse than the bite of hornets. Away, brute and dastard !

FRANTZ.

Go to, go to. Thou art feverish and raving ; say thy prayers before thou dost blaspheme.

KATIE.

Thou art a coward before men, and a vile slanderer to women. The headsman should pluck out the eyes from thy head, and the tongue from thy mouth, before thou wilt be a man fit for the world men live in. Had I the strength, thou should'st yet wander in darkness through the world.

FRANTZ.

Then should I be blinded by thy charms, fair amazon. I am patient with you. Lose not the time my patience grants ye, for by the fiend, next time ye part will be the last. Quick, girl, and be first confessor. Tell thy beads, good falconer.

HAL.

Were my conscience burthened with crimes like thine, no shrift should absolve me. Begone to thy occupation. I shall yet live to see thy bones bleaching betwixt earth and sky.

FRANTZ.

Tut, man, we'll change positions : I'll lend thee my honest name and the heir-ship, thus thou'lt become prophet to thy own perdition. As for the Baron——

HAL.

He comes to punish and avenge. He is embarked, and——

FRANTZ.

Bound for heaven. I go hence to meet him with a greeting of hate, second only to that I bear to thee, because it ariseth out of

another cause. I hate you because you are my opposite: I hate him, not that he has wronged me in any way, but that he is a man of gentle seeming and of fair report, withal: a cringing, bowing, modest, tenderly-sensitive;—that shuts his eye to offence, and feeds on melancholy: a man that hath ousted a good name and a sympathy out of the world, neither by gallant bearing nor by noble deed, but by the golden lace of rank,—the flimsy cloak of ancestry, and the craft of netting all fugitive opinions. My hate to these kind of men is akin to my nature, born with me, and to perish together. Make thy shrift, honest falconer! ye are both surely bound for heaven.

[*Going.*]

KATIE.

And thou most surely bound to hell.

FRANTZ.

Peace, woman! [*To Hal.*] Hark you, falconer. On one condition, I will free thee, to-morrow.

HAL.

Begone! Name thy conditions to the winds. What condition can make a knave acceptable to an honest man?

FRANTZ.

I cry your mercy. Your English cur is ever bold at barking, when he is chained too close to bite. Growl on, since it pleases thee, but I will be heard.

KATIE.

Name the condition, Master Frantz; we are poor captives.

FRANTZ.

To renounce thee! with his own lips let him proclaim thee wanton,—before thy face let him curse thee, woman! We will cry “acquit,” and he shall be free.

HAL.

Away, devil!

KATIE.

Devil!

FRANTZ.

Ha, ha, Devil!—that's the echo. To coo and nest, my turtle doves. Rare shrift let it be, and thy last orizon for me.

[*Exit Frantz.*]

KATIE.

Oh, Hal!

HAL.

All's well; come, be of good cheer, Kate.

KATIE.

We are both surely lost. Forgive me all, and we will die together.

HAL.

Die! Is the girl mad! The Baron will return.

KATIE.

Alas, don't trust to that. He is to be waylaid in the forest of Ravenswood, on his return to-night, and assassinated as if by robbers

for plunder. I heard the plot, and he confessed the plan himself to me. Sir Hubert has devised the destruction of the Baron and his young son,—

HAL.

Sir Hubert!

KATIE.

And this wretch will then murder Sir Hubert, his employer,—

HAL.

Monstrous!

KATIE.

And thinks to bear me away with the spoil. But we shall die together. I am faithful now.

HAL.

Horrible! and now, I remember,—the Well of Heldered is overflowed! Old Pollard, the woodman, told me of it this very morning.

KATIE.

Which never yet happened without mischance to the house. Would the holy virgin but deliver us now. Alas, there is not a chance of escaping. Unlucky Katie Thorn!

HAL.

We may escape.

KATIE.

How?

HAL.

I have a friend—faithful as a dog? Did he but know our place of concealment.

KATIE.

Ah!

HAL.

Hush! take this whistle from my neck; climb to the grate and look abroad. Quick, girl, more lives than ours depend on thy success! Can'st see the plains below?

KATIE.

Well! And the mists are gathering. There is a man, a goatherd; the dogs and tame goats follow at his heels. Listen.

[*Song heard below.*]

HAL.

Set the whistle to thy lips, and sound it. [*She whistles.*] Does he see thee? Sound again. [*Whistles again.*] does he hear thee? thrust out thy hand through the bars. He must:—That call may be heard for a league!

KATIE.

He hears it now.

HAL.

Again—louder. [*She whistles again.*]

KATIE.

He hears it: now he looks around, but cannot tell whence it comes. He looks this way, as I wave my hand, but he is old, and the distance and the mists hinder his sight. He is a fathom below.

HAL.

Once again, my girl. With all thy breath—sharp and shrill—now !  
[*She whistles again.*] Ha, heard he not that ?

KATIE.

He stops to listen ; it caught his ear. Alas ! there is an eagle wheeling above his head. He thinks 'tis the eagle's scream. Now, he gathers his goats and passes on.

[*Song is heard fainter.*]

HAL.

I hear his song again.

KATIE.

He turns the cliff, and I hear it no longer. Ho, Robin Graylock ! Robin Graylock ! [*Calling.*] 'Tis too late ; the mists are risen above the hills. Oh, to hear that old man's song but once again !

HAL.

Is there none other ? Art sure ?

KATIE.

None, none. I cannot see. The mists are risen, and I can distinguish nothing. [*Jumps down. Going to Hal, and throwing her arms about his neck.*] They shall never part us.

HAL.

They must have heard it in the woods. Cheer thee, my sweet. If they part us not till the morning break, we shall yet bring villainy to justice. But for my Lord, Providence alone, and his sword, can help him in his peril.

KATIE.

Hush, hush. What noise was that ?

[*They listen, Reynel appears at the grate. Katie screams.*]

HAL.

Silence, timid wench. A mountaineer, and no more valor. 'Tis Reynel Darrant. Give him thy hand—we are free !

KATIE.

Thanks to heaven, there. Good kind youth. Blessings on thy head, sweet idiot ! A vow to the virgin, if we escape ; and, oh, that villainous caiff, to be drawn and quartered !

HAL.

Courage, my friend. Thy knife to the lead and stone, brave fellow. Now for thy giant strength to the bar. Again ! By Nimrod, it yields ! it yields !

[*Reynel leaps down, and, hurriedly bursting the chains with which Hal is bound, motions him to the casement. Hal mounts, and, looking down, beckons to Katie, who draws back.*]

KATIE.

Farewell, Hal !

HAL.

Nay, girl, I'll bear thee safely down this single rope.

KATIE.

No, no; I should never reach the ground alive. Away, Hal, to the rescue at Ravenswood. The Baron's safety is our only means of succour.

[*Reynel testifies impatience.*]

HAL.

I will not go, and leave thee here.

KATIE.

Why Hal, thou lovest both of us.

HAL.

Better to lose both than risk losing thee. I will stay.

[*Comes down. Reynel beckons him to ascend, impatiently.*]

*Hal sits down.*

No! away, good Reynel; 'tis God's will, and we stay, and now that we are met, we will not part, though we die.

[*Embraces her. Knocking heard within. Katie starts up in terror, and runs to the door of the cell.*]

KATIE.

Fly, fly, Hal, if you would save me from to-morrow! Deny me, and you love me not. Hear me swear, that if the Baron of Ravenscourt fall by the hand of that caitiff, whilst thou tarriest here, by the most holy faith, I will surrender myself into his——

HAL.

Hold! No more. I go to save thee, if not to revenge us all.

[*Descends through the grate. Katie staggers to the wall, and listens, breathless. Whistle heard below.*]

KATIE.

They are safe. God speed the innocent.

[*Sinks down.*]

SCENE II.—*A Forest.*

[*Enter RAVENCOURT, with ATTENDANTS, and FRANTZ, disguised as a Guide.*]

FRANTZ.

It threatens for a storm.

RAVENCOURT.

A storm, my friend?

Shone never sun more bright in eastern clime,  
Where every day thro'out the sunny year,  
But rivals the preceding; every gleam  
That 'scapes the veil of foliage overhead,  
Seems to the earth a happy messenger.  
Could every heart that beats 'i the living world  
Experience and perpetualize for life  
The joy this passing moment brings to mine,  
The weather-wise should have no calling in't,

But to avize the houseless bird and brute ;  
 And men, regardless of their auspices,  
 Should learn, from looking into their own hearts,  
 The universal harmonies of nature.  
 In such a peace of thought, and calm of soul,  
 No aspect comes distorted or amiss ;  
 Her seasons *all* are fair !—her very storms  
 Seem but as natural changes to the scene,  
 Contributed like notes of sudden discord  
 Thrown with the impulse of a master hand  
 'Mong tones of music, to increase the charms  
 Of concord, by their very dissonance !  
 A storm ?—the calm that makes abode within  
 The bosom of recover'd penitence,  
 Falls like a dew upon the parched leaf,  
 Oil on the troubled waves, water on fire !  
 As gentleness pursued in argument,  
 Soothes the rough mind into subservience,  
 So hath the holy calm of crime-freed souls  
 Power to allay the wrath of elements,—  
 Make of their thunders, music,—and their frowns  
 Turn into smiles of beauty !

FRANTZ.

Good my lord,  
 The sun's i' the west, and all the birds at roost,  
 There's not a whiff o' wind o' land or sea ;  
 Observe how silent, weak, and motionless  
 Hangs every leaf on the boughs : bethink you, sir,  
 Such calm they say, up in the mountains yonder,  
 Plays herald to the storm and hurricane.

RAVENCOURT.

Herald to neither shalt thou be, so on !—  
 Serenity of thought, indeed, there is,  
 Moments of passing calmness, when the soul,  
 So sages tell us, at th' approach of woe,  
 Is by unnatural atmospheres oppressed  
 And lulled to sleep i' the face of deepest peril.  
 Is't thus, Oh heaven ! Have I but dreamed of peace,  
 Whilst some unnoticed evil, like a cloud,  
 Impending with its surcharge high above,  
 Waits but the signal of thy hand to launch  
 Its store of tempests.—

FRANTZ.

It is the best, my lord.  
 Hereabout lies a mossy hermitage,  
 'Twere best we tarried there.

RAVENCOURT.

Tarry ! Wherefore ?

I did but pause to breathe, not loiter, guide.  
Methinks thy speed's most churlishly inclined,  
When my impatience would outstrip the wind!  
Or flight of parent eagle to her nest,  
Both in their journey by as much outspeed  
As thou might'st pray my bounty to overrate  
Thy service and true deserts.

FRANTZ.

Not here? [*Aside.*]  
As for the bounty of your noble hand,  
We'll take it at the best. We foresters,  
So we may save our necks and liberties  
From confiscation, take no heed what grain  
Lie rotting in our granaries. What's the need  
A man should waste his youth in toiling for  
A time which at the least is unassured.  
We mete our labour to our appetites.  
The stomach, craving nought, our leisure makes;  
A gnawing belly will command us up  
To stay its rage; so will a parching tongue;—  
All else is liberty and inclination.  
But still, to life, can no desire stand forth  
For just comparison. 'Tis paramount  
And takes precedence, governing the rest!  
We value it, and guard it more than liberty,  
Esteem it more than wealth and health, prefer it  
Allied with penury, incessant toil,  
Disease, and even slavery, to death!  
Wherefore, great lord——

RAVENCOURT.

Come, come, we'll take another period,  
Spend no more breath in words.

FRANTZ.

Your pardon; 't was not to discuss our habits  
And customs, which do all in matter match,  
That I did let my tongue. I am your guide  
Of safety, then submit your guidance to me.  
I shall enforce upon your judgment, sir,  
The perils of proceeding, known alone  
To men experienced in the forest craft.  
The bears and wolves grown venturesome by night,  
Unless we tarry and procure us torches,  
Will end your expedition at a meal.

RAVENCOURT.

Bears and wolves!—Ho.—[*Significantly.*]  
Then if such brutes infest our forest shades,  
We'll hunt 'em down, anon. I much suspect  
These bears and wolves, of petty larcenies.



How comes it else, they pilfer from the dead  
 Their properties, e'en swords and leather jerkins,  
 To clothe themselves withal? These brutes, my friend,  
 Display a want of magnanimity  
 To their whole race, dishonouring and degrading.  
 Wherefore, thy branch of them we'll extirpate!

[*Motions to Attendants.*]

FRANTZ.

My Lord—

RAVENCOURT.

Confess! [*Intercepting him.*] What men are they in hiding?

FRANTZ. [*Drawing back.*]

They? Friends of mine.—[*Whistles.*]

RAVENCOURT. [*Stamping with his foot.*]

Foul treachery's afoot!

Seize him! come on, my friends.

[*They rush on Frantz.*]

FRANTZ.

No passage here.

Off, off!

[*Frees himself, and, drawing, attacks Ravencourt. Enter others, disguised; they join Frantz. Attendants fly.*]

FRANTZ.

Baron, your life is drawn,—come up a blank!  
 Make your own choice, the Cæsar, or the slave.  
 At once surrender to a manly death,  
 Or die a felon's!

RAVENCOURT.

I defy thy odds!

Unequal tho' they be. I am your Lord.

FRANTZ.

That's true, and one to four. Down with him, men!

RAVENCOURT.

Hold! I give pardon, free and uncondition'd,  
 To all laying down their swords, but this man.

FRANTZ.

Fool!

On him! surround him, back and front; being spent

He'll die more willingly.

[*Shouts heard near.*]

Hell! there's a cry without. Not four to one?

On him, and strike!—they'll hear the clash of swords.

RAVENCOURT.

Help! Help! Come on!

HAL and ADAM. [*Without.*]

Rescue! A Ravencourt!

[*They enter with DAVY and OTHERS. They fight; two of the brigands are slain; Frantz, still engaged with Ravencourt, wounds him.*]

FRANTZ.

Let that content! Follow!

[Turning to fly.

HAL.

Ho! Coward, come back!

FRANTZ.

Thou free, devil? Away, my men; one prize

Is ours to gain,—revenge! To Ravencourt.

[Exit, pursued by HAL.

RAVENCOURT, [Following.]

Pursue! a bowl of gold who captures him!

[Exit.

DAVY.

Here is a chance, Davy. Huzza! Now for thy manhood Davy:  
to the proof! to the proof! now for thy manhood Davy, and glory.

[Rushes out.

SCENE III.—*A defile leading to the sea. A storm.*

[Enter Two BRIGANDS.]

FIRST BRIGAND.

We shall have a night of it. What say you, is all ready?

SECOND BRIGAND.

All, save her cargo.

FIRST BRIGAND.

If this freak do pay us, I am satisfied; if not, my mind is made to  
leave the service and turn monk.

SECOND BRIGAND.

Which is a harder service in the end! Look well to that.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Not so, comrade, mine. These men, by giving up the face and  
seeming of command, do rule. We, on the contrary, seem to be  
equal all, but do to the letter obey the will of one man; which, look  
you, ill assorteth with my elder breeding. Since his flight to England  
we have been freer, and I happy; but since the moment when we had  
orders to embark, and sail hither at his bidding, I have not been  
myself, but a changed man. My spirit quails, sickens, grows wild at  
the thought of re-subordination.

SECOND BRIGAND.

Is this your thought? Would you rebel, Anscar?

FIRST BRIGAND.

Out on it! no. Change, man, change: will nought suit a man's  
ends for thee short of rebellion? Rebel, say you, no, no. One man  
in a community conspiring against the head, is called a traitor, and  
liable to pay the traitors' penalty; now this is not to my taste. If  
sixty men conspire,—

SECOND BRIGAND.

And what mean you if sixty men conspire?

FIRST BRIGAND.

Sixty men might hang a man, and sit down on the greensward under him to dine, and crack jests; but for one man to hang sixty were another reverse, and a jest the sixty might take ill.

SECOND BRIGAND.

Uncover thy riddle my friend.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Hush! more anon; here comes our head of the sixty.

[Enter FRANTZ, bearing KATIE insensible.]

FRANTZ.

I do burst with angry thoughts, and madden to do a deed of blood!

SECOND BRIGAND.

Is our meeting untoward signor?

FIRST BRIGAND.

Aye, and our expedition comrade; add that. The ship can never live through such a storm!

FRANTZ.

Forward! Prepare the boats; I'll bring her down.  
Unfortunate!

FIRST BRIGAND.

Unfortunate? It is as I predicted; we are ousted, man, and I will speak my mind.

SECOND BRIGAND.

Talk to thyself, then, I will bear thee no share in't.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Signor, your pardon for interfering, but whither shall we go for cargo?

FRANTZ.

Our cargo is here, as yet; now, question not, but quick to the shore.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Leave the girl here, and let us cut her throat.

FRANTZ.

Ay, when I bid ye, not else. The adventure's desperate, but we shall escape.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Escape? Without the booty? Curse on this business! [Aside.]

SECOND BRIGAND.

Once out at sea, we may defy pursuit.

FIRST BRIGAND.

The storm defies the devil! Why came we here at all?

FRANTZ.

Harkye, cavillers! This venture is untoward,—'tis mine! There let the matter rest. You demand "why came you here?" I brought ye, and ye are answered.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Why came we, was my question.

FRANTZ.

To do my bidding, mutineer! which if ye do not look to thy ears. Anscar, you are a bold man. I will have discipline, I will enforce it. Look to thy ears, and take counsel with thy tongue. For an example, take myself; for a warning, take Pietro Cabala, whose tongue I ript out for traducing me in Mantua. Thou art sound, but take heed of my warning. Enough; I have spoken. Away to the beach, by the short path down the steep, whilst I come round by the defile, which is an easier descent. And hark ye; touching our escape, behold those gibbets on the brow o' the cliff:—while they are tenantless, and we are free to buffet with winds and water,—well! To-morrow we may want strength to bicker with the crows!

*[Exit brigands.]*

Scorpions are these men of service, who crawl upon their bellies in your sight, content to coil and shelter under the weary heel, and, where 'tis vulnerable, there to plant the sting! I am vexed and stung to madness!

*[Exit with Katie.]*

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SCENE IV.—*Cliff on the Sea-beach.**[Enter BRIGANDS.]*

SECOND BRIGAND.

He is no longer worthy.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Agreed, then 'tis a bargain.

SECOND BRIGAND.

And yet is he a stay to us.—

FIRST BRIGAND.

Come, come, we are even; thou has't confest thou lov'st his wife, and should hate him bitterly as I.

SECOND BRIGAND.

True.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Madonna! then our danger is broad as daylight. If they take us, we hang; if he govern us, we two shall swallow his wrath with his steel, and what's a man the less in the band? Are not you and I good as he?

SECOND BRIGAND.

I' faith I will not deny it.

FIRST BRIGAND.

Nay, better; better, my Roman, come on. We'll draw lots for the command. If I win, thou get'st a wife and ducats: if thou, thou'lt have the wife and captaincy, in lieu of the ducats. Heave to, there! Quick, let's aboard, and away!

*[Exit brigands]*

[Enter FRANTZ, with KATIE still insensible.]

FRANTZ.

Ha, we are safe from pursuit. Wake up, girl; though no, 'twere better she slept on. And now,—[*Looking off.*—What! [*Pause.*] The boat! [*Shouts.*] They're bearing out to sea.—Yoho! Yoho! Men put to! My comrades hold your oars! Hell and destruction! they hear me and won't return.—Sold! Oh, what a dolt am I, so to have lost the game. Come back. [*Shouting.*] Curses on ye, must I pay the penalty; Softly, there's a voice.—Quick to resolve. I hold hostage for vengeance. Good;—I'll show 'em the last claw of a dying brute! [*Stepping on the cliff.*] By the world, it doth demand a steady hand to sign a death-warrant in the first degree!

KATIE. [*Awaking.*]

Release me, sir; what will you do? leap from the cliff! O, mercy! Would you drag me with you to destruction?

FRANTZ.

Here is an obstacle in a woman's tongue. Would I? Ay! Thy obstinacy and fickle fancy brings me here, woman! and thy life is fair to pay half the forfeit.

KATIE.

Oh, no, sir. Is this your love?

FRANTZ.

Pshaw!

KATIE.

Oh, take your own life, if you will murder somebody, but spare mine. Mercy! [*Shrieking.*] Have you no pity nor remorse?

FRANTZ.

Hush! I am at prayer. Say thine speedily, for if thou hast little to do, thou hast less time wherein to do it.

KATIE.

Spare me! Frantz!

FRANTZ.

I am busy, and have not time to spare. Have done with thy supplications, or by my hopes of heaven I will hurl thee first into the yawning gulph beneath us. See!

[*Holds her over the brink of the cliff, she shrieks and swoons in his arms.*]

Fool! I swore by my hopes of heaven. No: she shall go down with me, not for the love I bear her, but to vex and thwart that hound in the leathern doublet, who has escaped my vengeance. Let me but see him, and smile at his disappointment on my journey down, and I am content.

[*As he turns to the right, with one foot still on the brink of the cliff, DAVY, creeping in on hands and knees, left, comes suddenly behind, followed by HAL, and snatching Katie from his arms, bears her off. Frantz turns and is met by Hal.*]

Ha! thou art come in her place. Then I shall not go to hell alone.

HAL.

Thou hast no weapon. I scorn advantage over so base an enemy.  
We fight on equal terms.

*[Throws away his sword. They wrestle; Hal throws him, and kneels on his breast.]*

Thou art my prisoner. Surrender!

FRANTZ.

Let us rise, I prithee! Thou art too much for me, and my neck is broke.

*[Hal releases him, he springs towards Hal's sword. Hal, seeing his intention, catches, and striking him, hurls him violently backwards.]*

HAL.

A Briton's hand for thy treacherous pate, rascal!

*[Re-enter DAVY.]*

DAVY.

There was a rusty cuff! He's finished, Master Hal.

HAL.

No. I would not rob the provost of his fees. Hasten to the castle with him after me. Now to confer with my lord and advise him touching Sir Hubert and his perfidy!

*[Exit Hal.]*

DAVY.

Well hit, falconer. Caught him o' the jowl, eh? Altered he is, and haltered he will be or I am not worthy a groat; for I shall get the purse o' gold, and he shall get the order o' the garter from the hanging man of Ravencourt; so come along, my man of metal. *[Takes him by the ears.]* Holloa! He is only stunned; suppose he die on the road, and want to go to the devil headlong, being thus, how shall he see his way down to his region? No, no. He was a mighty rogue, and certain, but fair's fair, so come along with me by the tail, topsy turvy, with an honest serving man at thy heels.

*[Takes him by the heels, and drags him off.]*

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SCENE IV.—Evening. *A deep Recess in the Forest. In the back-ground the ruins of a mouldering arch, with water underneath half concealed with mosses and foliage.*

*[Enter SIR HUBERT, and REYNEL DARRANT leading ERNEST.]*

SIR HUBERT.

Thou hast led us far enough. Lend me thy knife.

*[Reynel gives him his wood knife.]*

Now leave us. *[He loiters.]* What's amiss?

Go back, I say!

Yet hold, my shaggy friend :—now I bethink me,  
 Thy wit hath keen perception on occasion ;  
 I shall return ; wait in the thicket yonder :  
 Dost mark me, man ?—out of all sight and call.

[*Exit Reynel.*]

“ This is a scene of calm and holy grandeur ;  
 “ Meet residence and fitting temple for  
 “ Mysterious nature ; this the quiet hour  
 “ When the soul, waking from diurnal slumber,  
 “ Debates its questions on the shadowy future ;  
 “ And man's ambitions, occupations, schemes,  
 “ Shrinking like slaves in a majestic presence,  
 “ Pass like the <sup>glean</sup> mirage of a dream,  
 “ Stript of delusion, naked to the truth ;  
 “ While earth and ocean, and the firmament,  
 “ Each teeming with convictions, and the wind,  
 “ With its ten thousand forest voices, wield  
 “ Their separate influences, and the nature,  
 “ God-like and noble, which at first possesseth,  
 “ The fallen being once allied to heaven,  
 “ Like a lost moon breaks radiantly forth  
 “ From clouds of shade and darkening mists, to light  
 “ The shadow-steeped mind in her eclipse,  
 “ And bid her for the season to resume  
 “ Her kindred with divinity.  
 “ How calm  
 “ These living, silent shades ! And at this hour,  
 “ No silver light of moon or planet breaks  
 “ The darkness of the star-proof boughs enwoven  
 “ In one o'er-arching canopy of leaves,  
 “ Whose stillness not a breath disturbs. Their trunks,  
 “ Aged and gnarled, resemble vaporous forms  
 “ Of collosean bulk, and 'twixt the spaces  
 “ Left thro' the blending of their jagged limbs  
 “ Leers many a distant eye that fancy lights  
 “ With weird expression 'mid the twilight gloom.  
 “ In bygone centuries, these wilds perchance  
 “ Formed the rude temple of the heathen worship,  
 “ Wherein its altars smoked with reeking blood  
 “ Of sacrifice, their thousand tongued echoes  
 “ Reverberating with the stifled shrieks  
 “ Of human victims, and the savage shout  
 “ And smother'd groan and dying yell of agony,  
 “ Drowning in wild confusion ! And behold  
 “ Again the altar and the innocent victim !  
 “ Ambition, Vengeance, thirsting both for blood,  
 “ Demand with reeking eyes their silent claim.  
 “ Shuddering with these grim thoughts I look

" For fiendish eyes, and listen for the sound  
 " Of some foul demon's laugh, whose hideous aspect  
 " With pointing fingers and familiar nod  
 " Shall fright and scare me from the haunted place.  
 " I look,—no better angel meets my eye!  
 " I listen,—not a murmur breaks the silence!"

[*Turning to Ernest and laying his hand upon his head.*

Dost love me, stripling? Art afraid to speak?  
 Come, tell the truth?

ERNEST.

My father bade me.

SIR HUBERT.

Well——

ERNEST.

I love my father.

SIR HUBERT.

And thy uncle?

ERNEST.

No.

They tell me that he hates my father, and  
 Would have him die.

SIR HUBERT.

Humph. Sit thee down beside yon arch to rest,  
 Or play about, that I may see thee enjoy  
 The air and leisure, boy: amuse thyself,  
 But go not out of sight: I would be alone.

ERNEST.

I'll gather flowers by the stream. Look you; A heron! [*Runs out.*

SIR HUBERT.

" Youth—Death—fearful opposites!  
 " Life is a round of changing terms and ages  
 " Apportion'd into lengths, spaces and distances,—  
 " Of single epochs form'd, which when united  
 " Do constitute the whole eventful chain.  
 " Oh Knowledge, godlike attribute!—that thou  
 " Should'st forfeit claim upon mortality,  
 " Lose caste, command and favour, power, esteem,  
 " Because the hand of apish Multitude  
 " Can hoot and hiss thee in its streets, and hunt  
 " Thy followers through its world, and persecute  
 " Thy priesthood at their shrine, thy gifted students  
 " And convert worshippers whip, scourge, and brand,  
 " Oppress, and slay with jealous hate, till Man  
 " Bound shuddering on the rack of man's opinion,  
 " Crying for 'peace!' and coward at martyrdom,  
 " Tortured and scoff'd at, and reviled for faith,  
 " Then lured with honied smiles and treacherous words  
 " To vile apostacy, abjures thy creed,——



" Throws down thy altars, tramples on thy rights,  
 " Turns the wide world into a lazar-house,  
 " And makes of life an ignominious period,  
 " First curse and purgatory of the soul !  
 " Thus is it the pursuit of life becomes  
 " Happiness,—peace,—not knowledge. Hence experience  
 " Vailing the silver head to grinning folly,  
 " Begs for a thankful owner, and in vain !  
 " Folly is wisdom, ignorance a blessing,  
 " And youth, unlearned, inexperienced youth,  
 " In its own season happy, takes precedence  
 " Of wisdom and maturity and age ;  
 " And men of years and majesty of thought,  
 " Look back regretful, finding inexperience  
 " Fertile in happiness, lament the change,  
 " And sigh for second infancy."

'Tis true.

Not manhood's dawn—when passion, waked and fresh  
 From dreams that shadow forth and barely shadow  
 The pleasures of her reign, with eye of fire  
 And brain of feverish hot imagining,  
 Deaf ear,—imperious voice,—irreverent hand,  
 Plucks down the slow impenetrable curtain  
 By nature hung before her sanctuary  
 To veil the arcana of human life  
 With her own mysteries from novitiate eyes,  
 " When passion far as straining thought can pierce  
 " Descries a boundless paradise in love,  
 " A region of intoxicating joys,  
 " And with the vision of this land of promise  
 " Feeds full the insatiate gaze and rushes forth  
 " To head the impatient banquet and to revel  
 " Unlearn'd and reckless on its first estate,—  
 " Not manhood's ripening prime with all its triumphs  
 " When pleasure charioted by fierce desire  
 " Riots in splendour thro' her meteor course,  
 " And in ambition's flight leaves fate behind,—  
 " Nor that calm season when the white-hair'd mammonite,  
 " Turn'd from the shatter'd idol of his clay,  
 " With trembling hands and eyes of flowing tears,  
 " Lifts up the prayer of grateful thanksgiving  
 " Unto the throne of Mercy and Forgiveness,  
 " His new belief,—no time nor season in  
 " Existence' term, save that of infancy,—  
 " Where misery's ineradicable weeds  
 " Self-sown and foster'd and of constant birth,  
 " Choke not the flowers and fruits of happiness,  
 " Destroy not being in its first principle,

"Turn not the bowers of Nature's lovely Eden  
"Into a barren wilderness!" Ho! Ernest!

---

If I remember, this should be the spot  
Of which the superstitious entertain  
The legend of a gift of prophecy.  
And thus it ran :—  
Sir Heldered, the bold,  
Far back as Alfred's time, inherited  
This Ravencourt; 'twas then a royal place,  
Thrice worth the now domain. Well, this good knight  
Being attached to hospitalities  
And foolish itchings for companionship,  
Harbour'd a Danish girl, of noble birth,  
Whose father heading an invasive force  
Fell by Sir Heldered's truncheon in the battle.  
" 'Twas but a lad that faced Lord Heldered  
"After the fray some month, and when the Danes  
"Had been expelled the island. An old scald  
"Convey'd him to the castle, and besought  
"With tears and songs of fearful prophecy  
"The countenance of the Norman for the son  
"Of his lost chief. That granted, he departed."  
In women's eyes the *youth* was beauty's image  
Personified, while certain strange reserve,  
Attributed to natural bashfulness  
In his demeanour, served to increase the passion  
Wherewith his comeliness alone inspired  
Their hearts. The lord himself, affecting him  
More than all else, foster'd and rear'd him up  
To seeming manhood. I can well bethink  
How favour heap'd upon a haughty mind  
Might, by the galling sense of obligation,  
Be magnified to wrong, and wean the mind  
From gratitude to stern antipathy ;—  
But for a woman to pursue the maze  
Of intricate revenge and persevere  
When passion heads the foe and bars the way,  
I'faith, seems wonderful! She lov'd the lord!  
"And yet was wont to wander in the woods  
"To mingle in her meditative dreams  
"Dark schemes of vengeance with her adoration,  
"And brooding o'er her father's fate, she'd pour  
"With triple calculated usury,  
"Alternate curse and blessing on the head  
"Of his destroyer, tho' her soul's delight."  
One night, 'tis said, Lord Heldered, engaged  
In plans of future profit to the youth,

Led him apart ; they stray'd into these woods,  
 And, whether in discovery of her sex  
 Which hitherto the maiden had concealed,  
 Or preconceived and sudden acted on  
 In furtherance of her vows, rests still unknown ;  
 But on this spot, impell'd with frenzied brain,  
 The object of her soul's idolatry  
 She sacrificed to erring vengeance !  
 Soon,  
 Repentance drove her mad ! and 'twixt remorse  
 And love distraught, she 'scaped her guardians hither,  
 Exhumed the body, and attaching fast  
 Her own thereto, leapt down into the well !—  
 Since then I've heard my ancestors attest  
 What time a heritor of our name or title  
 Comes to a bloody or unnatural end,  
 The waters of this well o'erflow their bounds  
 Disturb'd and all discolour'd in the spring,  
 Thus prophecying of the act.

*[Goes to the Well and, stooping, dips in the knife. On drawing it out again the blade is stained as with blood.]*

'Tis so.

Some stain of the marly soil. How like to blood !  
 Giving his knife back thus to yonder witting,  
 Suspicion shall affix to him at once,  
 More readily because of the affection  
 Known to be borne him by the child. Being seen  
 Last hand in hand together, and but he  
 Returning, must the evidence confirm,  
 Whilst I, in hot pursuit and search of truth  
 Apparently employed, in safest channels  
 Set on suspicion and direct the proof.

*[Re-enter ERNEST.] Sir Hubert, crossing to him, unbinds and takes off his scarf.]*

ERNEST.

Good uncle Hubert, do not tear my scarf !  
 It was my mother's—give it me again !

SIR HUBERT.

No, no. Fear not, my boy, I'll do't no injury ;  
 How the child pleads for't with his eyes !  
 Thy mother's scarf :—how might that little tongue  
 Break forth in touching eloquent appeal  
 By nature's very self inspired, to crave  
 That right absorbent of all other rights,  
 Bestow'd upon her children,—being ! life ! *[Aside.]*  
*[Throws the scarf round his neck.]*

ERNEST.

Nay, uncle, keep my scarf; only preserve it  
From harm, because it was my mother's. Uncle,  
What causes you to look so sad?

*[Sir Hubert starting, takes his hands, gazes on him  
affected for some moments in silence, and at last speaks.]*

SIR HUBERT.

" His words, by accident, have touched a string  
" Familiar once unto my ear as tuned  
" To sweetest music, whose delicious tones  
" Like an enchanting draught pour'd on my sense,  
" Dissolved the hardening marble of my heart,  
" Wean'd me from gloomy dreams and bound me back,  
" As by a potent spell, to my first nature!  
" Alas! the spell of harmony is broken;  
" Its music changed to jarring discords!" *[Moved]*

*[To Ernest.]* Boy,—

Thy father never loved me, nor my own;  
Yet I remember in my earliest youth,  
I was as gentle, tender, and affectionate,  
As now thou art;—like thee, I knew no mother:  
Nature, e'en nature, loathing, shook me off,  
Who, to her care, had equal claims with thee.  
Self-nurs'd, self-taught, self-led,—O where's the marvel;  
No hand of sympathy e'er guided me  
Into the sunshines of the world? I lived,—  
But not the cell of the retired ascetic,  
Nor cave of eremite or sworn misanthrope,  
Nor dungeon most profound for slave or captive,  
Nor gloomiest caverns in the mine of earth,  
So sad, so dark, so solitary were,  
As the unsmiling shadows which have been  
My haunt and refuge thro' necessity.  
I would have been, witness the truth my sorrows,—

*[Turns away his head.]*

Of nature and of merit, good! I am,  
With all man's attributes, without his joys,  
Human!—but alien to humanity.

*[Pauses. Ernest leans his head on Sir Hubert's arm;  
he starts, his head still averted, and comes forward.]*

I am as one whose mind and soul engaged  
In controversy on some mighty theme,  
Goes forth at night, abstracted from the world,  
To contemplate and solve their mysteries;—  
Who, wrapt in dreams, unconsciously pursues  
A path with dangers strewn at every step,  
Till, waked to sudden horror on the verge

Of an unfathomable precipice,  
 An impulse, strange as irresistible,  
 Plunges him headlong down the dark abyss,  
 All doubts to end, in silence and oblivion !  
 "Doubts !—When hath doubt snatch'd back the miser's hand  
 "Stretch'd forth for benefit and clear advantage ?  
 "Restrain'd the passions in their fearful course ?  
 "Calm'd raging madness into sanity ?  
 "What doubts claim kindred with divinity  
 "To wrest dominion from the soul of man ?  
 "Doubts of futurity ? Then tear away  
 "The veil from mystery ! If death alone  
 "Title the soul for its novitiate,  
 "Hope resting but on probability,  
 "Shall mortals fly the joys of actual being  
 "To pass those closing shades, and find beyond  
 "Vacuity,—annihilation ?—What man,  
 "Endowed with reason and discerning powers,  
 "Will render up aggrandizement for chance ?"  
 Here lies possession,—there uncertainty.  
 Abandoning the one, I nothing gain  
 Save chance hereafter for the other ; eschewing  
 The last, is to exchange my footing from  
 The quicksand to the safe and stable rock,  
 Leaving the solveless problem to the Fates !\*

*[Draws, and turns fiercely to Ernest. Ernest looks at him but does not move away.]*

No fear? No terror? I am the greater coward !

*[Letting fall the point of his sword.]*

While courage grows from conscious innocence,  
 Guilt hears a whisper'd curse in every wind !  
 Oh foul unnatural deed ! An archangel  
 Might quit his occupation in the skies  
 Beholding it, and arm'd direct from heaven  
 With all His hurling thunderbolts, come down  
 To mar the bloody project and at once  
 Blast the projector ! Is there no retribution ?  
 Creation's silent,—but it needs must be !  
 Albeit the evidence of outer worlds,  
 Of glorious nature too, we may defy,  
 Yet there's a voice within convinces us  
 Despite all sophistries, all arguments,

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\* The reader's good sense will controvert many fallacies contained in the speeches of Sir Hubert. They are intended to represent the workings of a mind unrestrained by moral principle, and devoid of faith ; of insubordinate passions, and therefore prone to evil ; with no bar to the conception of crime, and with only one bar to its execution, viz. :—the feeble policy of man to man.

The human heart may forge for its own ends,  
 As surely of Eternity as God !  
 " Shall this young soul, ascending there in all  
 " Its native purity, bar fast the gates  
 " Of everlasting Paradise 'gainst mine ?"  
 No ; there's a chance, howe'er indefinite !  
 A shadowy chimera,—a single hazard,—  
 Embracing which, resolved, confirmed, content,  
 I brave the issue ;—so to stand or fall !

*[Rushes to Ernest and throwing the scarf over his head as he steps back to stab him, REYNEL rushes between, and seizing Sir Hubert by the throat, compels him to let go his sword. In the struggle Sir Hubert overcomes Reynel, and is urging him backwards towards the Well, when the latter observing his knife in Sir Hubert's belt, suddenly plucks it out and stabs him. Sir Hubert, after a desperate effort, relinquishes his hold ; Reynel thrusts him over by degrees into the Well, watching and standing over, as if expecting him to reappear. Then, coming forward with an air of triumph, he snatches the scarf from Ernest's head, and flourishing that and the knife, rushes out.]*

*[Enter ALICE.]*


ALICE.

In time ! He's found !

*[Ernest points to the Well. She goes to the brink, and looking in, exclaims—*

The prophecy's fulfill'd !

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 In representation this scene precedes the two former ones, being then Scene the 3rd, instead of Scene the 5th, in the same Act.

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SCENE VI.—*The Castle Hall. Banners suspended from the roof, the walls covered with figured tapestries, and hung with armour, and trophies of war and the chase.*

RAVENCOURT, ADAM, SENESCHAL, RETAINERS, ATTENDANTS,  
 and VILLAGERS.

RAVENCOURT.

Thanks, honest yeomen and good friends. This welcome  
 Goes far to reassure me of your hearts !  
 These perils having 'scaped, I thank the saints,  
 Together with those friends whose timely aid  
 My life preserved from the assassin's steel ;

And trust, myself being safe return'd, and all  
 Restored to wonted custom and tranquillity,  
 No further trouble shall our house assail.  
 But where's Sir Hubert?

SENECHAL.

He's gone forth, my lord :  
 His habit is to go abroad at night !  
 Perdie, my lord, Sir Hubert's like an owl,  
 O'erchary of companionship; shuts up  
 His presence from the day, nor hies him forth  
 To look upon the world with open eyes  
 Till other men's be closed in dreams ! My lord,  
 I am bold to say Sir Hubert loves the darkness  
 On all occasion better than the light.

RAVENCOURT.

Hound ! What, grown silver-hair'd in menialship,  
 And dare t' asperse the honour of our house !  
 What ho ! [*Stamping his foot.*] Fetter him hand and foot !

[*Retainers seize him.*]

Away with him ! Unthankful varlet !

SENECHAL.

Oh,  
 Shall one unmeasured speech be weigh'd against  
 The services of threescore years ?

RAVENCOURT.

Hold, hold !—  
 For threescore years ? Release him. I'm loath to show  
 Inclemency, and most of all to-night.  
 Let him go free. Henceforth remember, sirrah,  
 Sir Hubert greet with title and respect  
 As due unto my brother, guest, and friend ;  
 To whom a slight as brother, guest, or friend,  
 Is insult offered to his entertainer,  
 The which no service past nor former favour  
 Shall warrant or excuse. [*Approaching him and taking his hand.*]  
 For threescore years,  
 Thy term, old man ?

SENECHAL.

So please you, my lord, threescore ;—  
 No other roof in sunshine or in sorrow.

RAVENCOURT.

'Twixt rule and service lies strange variance !  
 I had forgot thy age of sweat and toil.  
 Thou hast done faithfully, good seneschal ;  
 I will not take thy office from thee, but  
 Exempt thee from its labours. From this hour

Thou art no bondsman : rate me not with thanks  
To which I have no claim. Retire, old servant.

[*Enter DAVY with FRANTZ.*]

So, so, my gallant man-at-arms, right well  
Thou hast sped upon thy first campaign ; i' faith  
Thy spoil but ill rewards the conqueror.

DAVY.

So please you, noble lord and master, his carcass  
Will well reward the crows I spoil'd him for.  
Lie down, I'll change thee for a bag o' crowns.  
For tussling with this man of sword and grizzle,  
My lord, I do beseech you grant me, manhood !  
All else of 'em be 'scaped and out at sea.

RAVENCOURT.

And let them go ; but I've a liking for thee,  
Being a witness of thy prowess, mind,  
Shall bear thee company through all thy life.  
Adam, thy service shall be well requited.  
Henceforth no tithe nor commutation pay,  
Nor feudal right thou'lt own, but live released  
From all dependence, claim, and cumbrance.  
Thy house and all's thine own, save, honest yeoman,  
One piece of household furniture I claim,  
And shall reserve t' endow a friend withal,  
And nobly portion'd too. Of this hereafter.

FRANTZ.

Lord Ravencourt——

RAVENCOURT.

Confess ! Thy doom is——

FRANTZ.

Fixed !

RAVENCOURT.

What prompted thee to this atrocious act ?

FRANTZ.

Come near ; [*Catching his wrist.*] I'll give thee matter for employ  
Whereby the memory of my end shall haunt  
Thy after days, appear in all thy dreams,  
Word, look, and touch, as perfect and as real  
As at this moment when the gripe of death  
Locks fast thine arm, and with the look of hate  
And voice of pitiless and full revenge,  
I bid thee take—my curse—and—with that curse,  
Pronounce thee——childless !

[*Dies.*]

RAVENCOURT.

Fiend !—Drag him from my sight !



Unfix his gripe! I gasp and choke for words!  
To the rack with him! Childless! Are ye all dumb?

[*They drag him off.*]

Will none relieve my horrent fears or strike  
Me drivelling mad to hear the truth? Who speaks?  
Are ye struck mute with horror, or am I but  
The victim of some hell-wrought phantasy  
That drives me on to madness?

SENESCHAL.

Not so, my noble lord. A foul invention,  
Utter'd to gratify his bloody thirst  
For vengeance even in death. He is abroad  
With Reynel in the woods. I saw them go forth,  
And have despatch'd a dozen messengers  
To bear the news.

[*Enter TWO ATTENDANTS, and HAL.*]

RAVENCOURT.

Speak! Have ye not brought him?—  
Ernest!

ATTENDANT.

We've search'd through all the woods, my lord,  
And neither can discover.

RAVENCOURT.

What's in this?  
Sir Hubert absent,—my boy abroad? at this hour  
Abroad? My fears bode ill of it. Good falconer,  
These doubts begin to press upon my heart,  
Tie down my tongue and freeze my utterance.  
Not to be found—what ho, scour all the woods,  
Let loose the bloodhounds! At this hour of night  
Out in the woods! Gather the men, seneschal;  
Away, good villagers; disperse them, Hal,  
Through every corner!

HAL.

Heaven divest your fears.

[*Exit Hal, Davy, and Villagers.*]

RAVENCOURT.

Without there!—torches. Are the men all gather'd?  
I will direct the search. Out in the woods,  
And with Sir Hubert? No, no, with the boy,  
The idiot, Reynel Darrant. [*Starts.*] Ha!—Can it be!  
Childless—that in a sudden flight of reason,  
The dormant fiend arising in his brain,  
Has prompted him to bloody deeds?—oh, horrible!  
Whilst I, a frienzied fool, stand jabbering here.

What ho ! Quick ! Quick ! A torch ! Lead forth ! Scour all  
The woods !

*[Rushing off ; enter REYNEL. Waving the scarf and brandishing the knife above his head, he takes the stage. Ravencourt meeting him at the entrance, stands thunder-struck and leaning against a pillar for support, observes his motions in silent horror.]*

What apparition's this ? *[Drawing.]* May fiends conspire  
'Gainst innocent living men and force them to  
Foul crimes and death, to jeopardise their souls ?  
Have I an eye, a tongue, an ear ?—or do  
These senses all distorted and deranged  
Mock shatter'd reason with unreal conceits,  
As slaves may mock a despot, late dethroned,  
And triumph in his fall ? My brain whirls round  
As on the rack of hissing fiery wheels !  
My eyes with weird contortions magnified,  
Struggle and roll within their fibrous cells,  
As tho' to burst their thrall ! And in my ear,  
Ring shrieks of laughter, borne upon the wind,  
And fiendish voices, that do syllable  
My loss, in whispers and in thunder ! Childless !  
Speak ! Where's my boy ? Oh, I forgot,—he's dumb.  
But eyes with savage exultation fill'd  
Reveal the truth in his insanity.  
That was his scarf, and there's his blood on it,  
And that must be the knife that murder'd him ;  
See how he leaps with madness ! Ho, come in !  
Die, wretch ! *[Stabs him.]* Abortion, foul and most unnatural !  
A thousand deaths !—Oh for some thought of torment,—  
Then live again and die a thousand more ;  
Till, for the one thou hast inflicted here,  
Thou'rt driven to hell with all tormenting wounds.  
How curst am I ! O heaven, too harsh, too cruel,  
Had'st thou no penance for my erring soul  
Beside this pitiless expedience ?  
Let me appeal to all surrounding worlds,  
Justice and wrath there be, but mercy, none !

*[Shouts heard. Enter ADAM THORN, DAME THORN, KATIE, ALICE, HAL, and VILLAGERS, with ERNEST. They all shout. Ravencourt, stretching out his arms and reeling forward, attempts to go to Ernest, but stops half way and rests upon his sword. Alice, with a loud shriek, rushes forward and throws herself down beside Reynel.]*

ALICE.

Whose ruthless hand has done this murder ? Say,  
What monster cannibal or savage beast

Could tear her offspring from the mother's lap  
 And slay it for his sport? Remorseless deed!  
 Whose thought conceived, whose hand enacted it?  
 But why a question ask, my heart can answer,  
 Without the proof of sight? Lo, where he stands,  
 The cruel weapon trembling in his grasp!  
 Was it that he was reasonless and dumb,—  
 Unblest with love? Then was he theme for pity;  
 Nor I, his mother did less pangs of birth  
 Endure for it, but held him thrice beloved  
 That he was theme for pity or derision.  
 Ernest of Ravencourt, 'twere better far  
 Thy brother's treacherous sword had slain thy son,  
 Than thine, with fatal and impetuous haste,  
 Should kill this gentle unoffending youth:  
 For to his life thou art tied in double bonds  
 Of gratitude and nature: 'tis thy blood,  
 Shed by thyself. And yonder bier sustains  
 Thy brother, whose uplifted treacherous strength  
 Had crush'd thy rose but for this clammy hand  
 Which, warding off the blow, preserved thy heir.  
 For this does he lie bleeding at thy feet!  
 This dying youth—he is thy son!—and I—

RAVENCOURT.

Thou!

ALICE.

Alice Brand.

RAVENCOURT.

Heaven is inscrutable!

[Kneels.]

REYNEL. [*Feebly.*]

Mother!

[*They group around him. He beckons to Ravencourt, and fixing his eye on him, joins their hands slowly; then, turning to Alice, smiles, points upwards, and dies.*  
*Pause.*

RAVENCOURT. [*Sobbing, and pointing to Ernest.*]

Alice!

[*She totters forward and falls into his arms.*  
*The curtain falls to slow music.*

THE END.

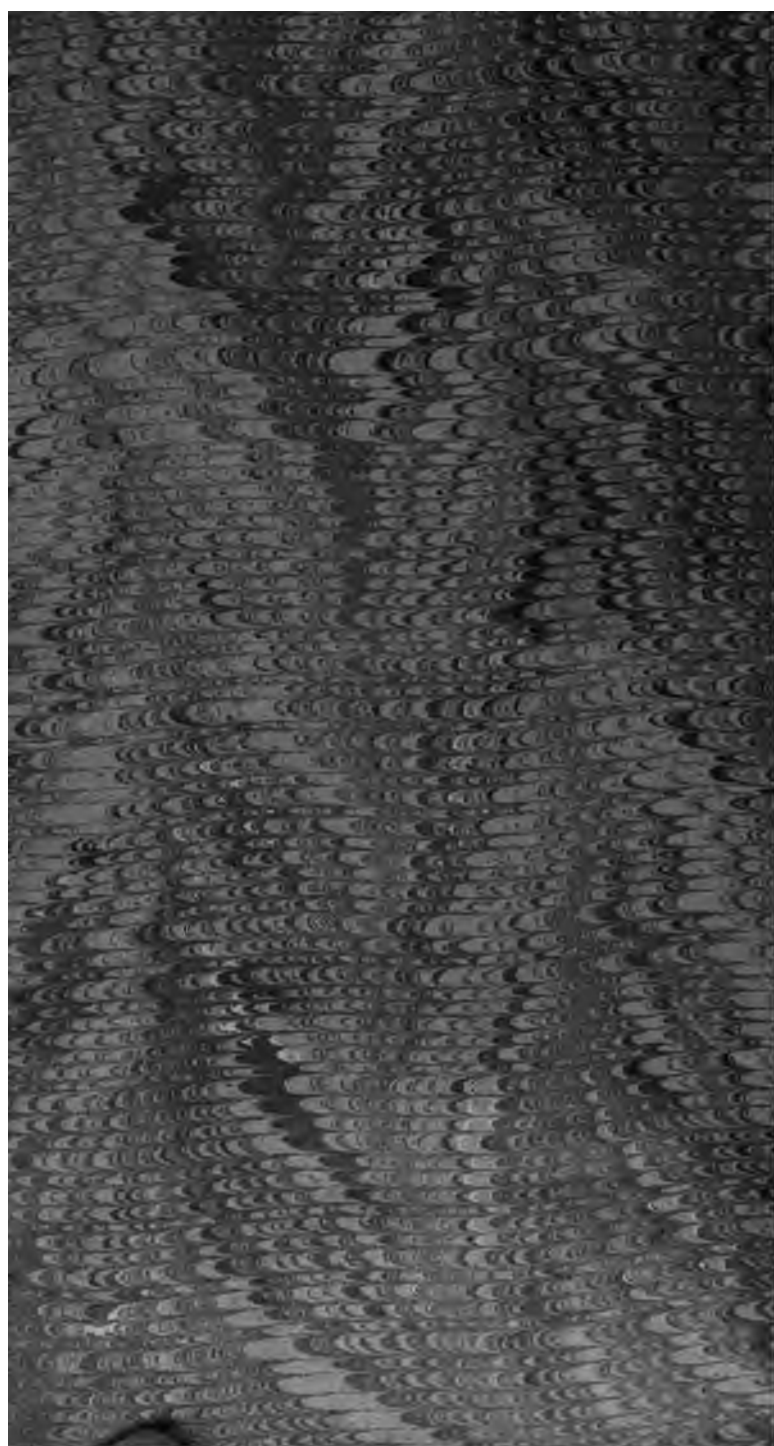
ERRATUM.—Page 69—For *Scene 4* read *Scene 5*.



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1. John  
 2. John



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